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Communism and Fascism

Part I

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THOUGH to Russia belongs the unenviable distinction of having first attempted the establishment of Marxian Communism, it is generally overlooked that the doctrine is not of Russian origin but was imported from Western Europe. The political and economic theory of Marx derives from various sources: its revolutionary spirit was French, its philosophy German, its economics English, and these elements were welded together by a Jew obsessed by the messianic idea.

The idea of Communism is as old as history. It means communion, mutual participation, sharing, having all things in common, and above all, a society which does not make use of money. But in the past, attempts at its realization were limited to groups inspired by a religious motive. Its emergence in politics as a social gospel whose application was to be co-extensive with society was a logical consequence of the suppression of the Luddite Riots. The advent of machinery was accompanied by a growth of prosperity – a prosperity in which the working classes shared, for wages were high and work plentiful. But about the year 1806 supply began to outstrip demand and thus upset the wage system – that is, the system of distributing purchasing power in payment for work done. It was then that the displacement and depreciation of labor began. By 1811, the distress had become acute, and as a result of widespread unemployment the infuriated workmen rose and destroyed the machinery. The riots began in Nottingham with the destruction of stocking- and lace-frames, and spread into Yorkshire and Lancashire. The situation was met by Draconian laws that made the willful destruction of machinery a crime punishable by death, and in January, 1813, eighteen workmen died on the gallows at York.

The suppression of the Luddite Riots was a turning point in modern history, for it committed society to the unrestricted use of machinery. It meant, among other things, that society refused to face the problem of how labor was to be rewarded under a system of machine production, and had taken refuge in that complacent idea of economists that everything comes right in the end, inasmuch as there is in society a natural equilibrium, which given free play will assert itself. Because of this belief industrialism thenceforth came to live by its wits – increasing the volume of production with each new labor-saving invention, and stimulating the consumption of all kinds of unnecessary things in order to keep the workers in employment and provide the money to pay for the necessary things they required. This necessity is the central fact about industrialism, which has turned it into a Frankenstein's monster. It is the key to all its economic developments which frustrates all efforts at stabilization, and leads by a logical process to the present impasse. The Great War, Communism, Fascism, Nazism, the New Deal were all implicit in the suppression of the Luddite Riots; since had the problem of machinery been faced at that date and the reasonable demands of the workers been met, social and economic development would have taken a different course.

It was at this time, when society was perplexed by the social problems which the use of machinery presented, that Robert Owen was led to pursue those speculations that laid the foundation of Communist thought. The facilities for the production of wealth, which the new machinery provided, had made a tremendous impression upon his imagination, and any idea of abolishing the use of machinery or curtailing its use he never appears to have entertained. He was of the opinion that machinery, tended by a comparatively small number of manual workers, would soon be capable of supplying the needs of mankind. What, in such circumstances, was to become of the working-class? Were they to die of starvation in the midst of plenty, or were they to live upon doles? For if existing social arrangements were to be retained there were no other alternatives.

In his *History of British Socialism* Max Beer, writing of this period, says:

> The demands of the poor for parish relief increased to such an extent that the House of Commons appointed a Committee on Poor Laws. Robert Owen having found it impossible to explain his views upon the matter to a committee appointed by a meeting of the leading men of London, wrote a report for the Parliamentary Committee on Poor Laws, March, 1817. A year later he

further elaborated his reforms on behalf of the working class in a memorial to the Allied Powers assembled in congress at Aix-la-Chapelle, and in 1819 he caused one of his literary friends, probably George Mudie (editor of *The Economist*, 1821-2) to write a number of open letters to Ricardo on the same subject. The gist of these letters was that machinery had facilitated production to such a degree that the world was becoming saturated with wealth. As long as manual labor was the main source of wealth demand and supply balanced. Production and population were to each other as 1 to 1. In the years 1792 to 1817 the proportion changed enormously. Production to population were now as 12 to 1. As machinery worked cheaper than manual labor, the latter was being depreciated or displaced. The total wage bill of the country diminished; the working class lost, therefore, much of the fund from which they satisfied their needs, the home market contracted, and the superfluous commodities remained unsold in the barns and warehouses. When the invention of the steam-engine and other engines was made, either the greatest blessing or the greatest curse was bestowed upon society. At present, the latter prevailed, and a considerable portion of the British population was doomed to pauperism. It was in vain for manual labor, under the present conditions, to contend with the sinews of mechanism. On the other hand if it were possible to make consumption keep pace with production, labor and capital would be beneficially employed, and distress would be unknown.

But this could not be the case so long as private gain, and not social welfare, ruled economic life. As things stood now, production would more and more outstrip consumption, for the export trade must gradually decrease, and the home market contract, and therefore unemployment and insecurity of existence increase, until the working classes, finding their remuneration either gone or reduced below the means of subsistence, would be goaded into fury and despair, and suddenly overwhelm our noble and beneficent institutions and lay them in ruins. "We resemble individuals standing on a narrow causeway of a surrounding abyss." All this happened because the human mind, after countless ages of struggle with poverty and ignorance, finally succeeded in unlocking the sources of wealth; in multiplying the productive forces; in rendering the production of goods easy. It was abundance that brought upon us misery! Large masses of producers were thrown upon the Poor Laws because they had produced too much wealth! How paradoxical it all looked! What was the remedy? Some said Poor Law Reform; others advised emigration. But all remedies of that kind were no good, for they did not touch the problem. The real cure lay in arrangements that would enlarge consumption and make it tally with production. Such arrangements were conditioned upon combined labor and expenditure, or communism.

We see then, that there is a definite connection between the problems of machinery and the rise of Communism. The introduction of machinery had depreciated the wage-system, yet Owen saw that if consumption was to be equated with production wages would have to be increased. And as he was of the opinion that this was impossible so long as machinery was in private hands, our competitive system, based upon the private ownership of machinery, land, and capital, would need to be replaced by a Communist organization of society. Then machinery, instead of being a curse, would become a blessing, inasmuch as under such arrangements the wealth of the community would be equitably distributed, since no one would starve through lack of work.

From 1825 onwards the currents of thought, generated by Owen and his followers and their anti-capitalist criticism, reached the thinking portion of the working class and created Chartism. This movement, which gradually assumed national proportions and was in full swing in the second quarter of the last century, was nominally, as its name implies, a movement for democratic parliamentary reform. But Chartism was a misnomer, for in reality it was an elemental class war, and constituted a series of revolutionary efforts to reorganize society on a Communist and Labor basis, in order to adjust the social and economic arrangements of society to the circumstances of machine production, the misuse of which it was persuaded would speedily disrupt society. But they all came to nothing. After 1839 Owenism as a social system showed signs of falling to pieces, and in 1845, with the disastrous break-up of Queenswood, the last of the Owenite colonies, it collapsed. Thus Chartism was left without a social faith, and this by undermining its driving power, paved the way for its ultimate failure in the fiasco of 1848.

Karl Marx was the heir of the Chartist movement. With the return of prosperity which followed the development of railway building and the expansion of foreign trade people began to think that the difficulties of the first half of the nineteenth century were nothing more than the maladjustments incidental to the transition from hand to machine production, and it was not long before the problem of machinery was obscured and forgotten so far as most people were concerned. But Marx had no illusions. He saw clearly that the problem remained exactly where it was, inasmuch as the return of prosperity had not been effected by facing and overcoming the difficulties that the employment of machinery presents, but by external events. The crisis had been postponed by enlarging the area of the problem. It was no longer national but international. It had been postponed but it could not be postponed indefinitely, for a time would come when the equipment trade would come to an end and international trade would reach its limit of expansion, and when that limit was reached the unemployment problem would return with an increased intensity, because it would be insoluble apart from a fundamental change in the basis of society. In anticipation of that return, Marx set to work to develop a social theory that would provide a firmer base for Communist activity than had been provided by the fragmentary and contradictory theories of Owen and Chartism.

We saw that Owen had taken the unrestricted use of machinery for granted. The only evil he saw in connection with the use of machinery was that it displaced labor. By the middle of the century, however, it had become abundantly clear that the use of machinery had other implications. It was proving itself to be destructive not only of the wage-system but of every other institution of society. The realization of this fact called for a reconsideration of the Communist position, because it followed that if the movement was to be justified it could only be on the assumption that in the long run machinery would prove itself to be a constructive as well as a destructive force. This was the issue which confronted

Marx; and he met it by dispelling any doubts there might be as to the validity of Communist activities by affirming that machinery was both destructive and constructive; it not only destroyed old traditions and institutions but created new ones to take their place. In support of this contention he adumbrated a materialist conception of history and society in which he sought to supplant the Christian conception – which sees the heart and mind of man as the active creative principle in the center, and the systems and institutions as its more visible expression, radiating from it, and changing in obedience to changes in the motive power at the center – by one which attributes all social phenomena ultimately to the blind workings of external causes, particularly to the forces of production. Under the influence of productive work and its needs, men build up their forms of social organization, their religion, arts, philosophy, and science. The material production is the substructure or foundation, while the corresponding political, religious, moral, aesthetic, philosophic, and scientific systems are the superstructure; and they are so related that the superstructure is nothing more than the psychical reflex and effect of the material conditions of society.

This is the central idea of Marx. It is important as supplying the ultimate rationale of Communist activity; for though Marxians regarded the Class War as decisive, it is illogical to do so, since historically the Communist movement exists to find a solution for the problem of machinery. There is only one objection to it: it does not happen to be true. Experience is proving Marx to be wrong. There is no evidence whatsoever to prove that machinery is creating any new institutions or traditions to replace the ones it has destroyed. For the new ones that have come into existence serve only the surface of life; they are no substitutes for the old, the place of which remains empty. They do not satisfy our permanent needs. The truth is, machinery is imitative rather than creative. It provides substitutes that are never entirely satisfactory. There is always something left out, something which the machine can't do; and that something is always the thing that finally matters. There is a sense in which machinery is parasitic; it is parasitic on art and handicraft. And like all parasites it will itself die when it has destroyed the things it lives on.

Mention has been made of the fact that Communists regard the Class War as decisive. Nothing, of course, could be further from the spirit of Communism, and it is difficult to understand how anyone could come to believe that a policy of class warfare could eventuate in Communism. The association of the two ideas is only to be understood when approached historically; then it is perfectly intelligible. The appeal of Owen had been to all classes. He asked all classes to face the problem which the use of machinery involved and to assist him in the promotion of Communism. But he met with little response outside of the working class. It was the recognition of this fact that gave birth to the idea of class warfare. To establish Communism, it was necessary for the working class to make warfare on the bourgeoisie who objected to it. Marx went one step further and declared class warfare to be the dynamic law of history. Thus we see how mechanization and class warfare came to be associated with Communism. It all proceeded logically from the suppression of the Luddite Riots in the interests of the unrestricted use of machinery. The anti-religious spirit of Communism is to be connected with the fact that both Owen and Marx were atheists, and the further one that it was grafted upon Nihilism in Russia, which had a definitely anti-religious origin.

According to Marx, Communism would appear at the end of the process of industrialization; which is additional proof that Communism was envisaged as the solution for the problem of machinery. The last stage of industrialism would be marked by the arrival of a large and permanent army of unemployed. Society would become sharply divided into two distinct and hostile classes – the financiers, capitalists, and landlords on the one side and the proletariat on the other. The workers, goaded by increasing misery, would then rise and take possession of land, capital, and the means of production and exchange, and proceed to organize society for the benefit of all instead of for the few. But it did not work out like this. Though the last stage of industrialism is being marked by the arrival of large and permanent armies of unemployed in all highly industrialized countries, the workers have not risen in a single case.

Such revolutions as there have been were not true to type. The German Revolution after the War was political rather than industrial, and a consequence of military defeat. The workers put themselves under the Socialist leaders, who though they were professed followers of Marx made no attempt to take possession of industry, but came immediately to an arrangement with the capitalists to carry on. Nor was the Revolution in Russia any more to type. The Revolution was not an uprising of the industrial proletariat against their capitalist masters but the capture of the post-War chaos in Russia by a group of professional revolutionists who proceeded to impose the Marxian ideology upon the Russian people. Moreover Russia at the time of the Revolution was a country in which industrialism was in its infancy. There were, it is true, some very big capitalist concerns in Russia before the Revolution – some of the largest cotton mills in the world were to be found there. Yet viewed in relation to the vast extent of the country industrialism was negligible. The factory population was an insignificant portion of the Russian people; out of a total population of 170 millions it only numbered three million. Russia was still a land of peasants, and mainly agricultural. Hand production was still the rule; natural resources were scarcely exploited. Yet it was in Russia that the experiment was tried. What is the explanation?

The explanation is psychological rather than economic. Russia was still in the nineteenth century. Its faith was that of the Victorians who believed that mankind can be saved by knowledge, industrialism, and technique, and so the Russians could respond to the Marxian gospel which was addressed to an age that thought in the same terms. Moreover Marxian Communism was a novelty in Russia, and acted upon the Russians like a revelation. It was firmly believed in by an active minority who had long been persecuted by the Tsars, and this had formed their temper, steeled them, and given them that driving force which made them irresistible. An eye-witness of the October Revolution told me that the Bolsheviks did not triumph because many people believed in them or understood them, but because they were the only people who had their minds made up, who knew what they wanted to do; and this was decisive at a time when the situation demanded immediate action. Another factor was that the Communist ideal which the Bolsheviks proclaimed was mistaken by the Russian peasantry for the Communism which they assosociated with the Kingdom of God. In highly industrialized countries, on the other hand, Marxian Communism had been agitated for so long that it had become stale. It had lost the power to evoke that fanatical faith so necessary to the promotion of revolution. And because of this not even the shock which the traditional order received from the Great War and the economic crisis which followed could produce a revival of faith in the realizability of Marxian Communism.

Another reason why the Communist experiment was made in Russia was that the War had exposed the military weakness of the nation. If therefore Russia was not to become an economic dependent of some foreign power, presumably Germany or Japan, it was necessary to industrialize the country; to make it industrially self-sufficient, at any rate in regard to the heavy industries; to speed up development in order that when the next crisis arrived Russia could meet other industrialized countries on equal terms – and among other things the Bolsheviks proposed to industrialize Russia. The faith of the Bolsheviks was in industrialization and they met with ready support because in addition to the foregoing reason machinery was a novel toy in Russia. The Russians wanted machinery because they did not know it. They did not know what a Frankenstein's monster it could become: how it could make the world a much more unpleasant place to live in than before, and how the increase of the powers of the human mind over natural laws, which promised the millennium, could be much more easily used to enslave and to destroy the traditions of civilization. They did not know these things, but the workers in highly industrialized countries knew them only too well. They knew that the rosy prophecies of industrialism had not been fulfilled, and that their leaders had become skeptics – and that made all the difference.

From the very outset the Bolshevik Revolution partook of the nature of a collision between theorists fired with a new ideal, and political, social, economic, and psychological conditions of which they had no comprehension; and in this collision the idealism has evaporated. There is no Communism in Russia today. The attempt to establish it was abandoned in 1921 when recourse was had to Collectivism on the assumption that the transition from capitalism to Communism was only possible by passing through an intermediate stage of Collectivist accountancy and control. In Russia people do not hold things in common but individually. Money is used, and if the worker has no money he can no more get food and clothing in Russia than in any other country. Taxes are levied and the wage-system obtains. Moreover different rates are paid corresponding to different degrees of responsibility, skilled and unskilled, light and heavy work. Piecework rates obtain, while the system of promotions, carrying with it increased earnings, is in full blast in every enterprise. In all these respects the Russian system is identical with that of capitalism, but the workers are nothing like so well off, for prices are high. This follows naturally from the fact that with a terrible shortage of skilled workers the quality of production is execrable and therefore extremely costly, being sometimes as much as five times as high as under capitalism.

These things obtained under the first Five Year Plan which was completed on December 31st, 1932. Since then there has been a further retreat from Communism towards individualism and tradition. The principle of private property is nowadays admitted in a limited degree. The workers may buy government bonds bearing interest and bequeath them to their children, while a peasant on a collective farm may own his animals, implements, and a small plot of land, and may dispose of his crops freely. Stalin justified himself in making these concessions to the peasants in a speech he delivered on January 24th, 1932, in which he declared that collective farming would have collapsed if he had continued to insist on equality, and that under existing conditions the most practical model was the traditional Russian artel in which each co-operator had a private plot of land. Other recent changes which foreshadow a general return to tradition include: abolition of committee management in favor of personal responsibility, the restoration of ranks in the army, the abolition of proletariat privileges, and a return to traditional discipline in educational methods and in the family code. Class divisions have reappeared; the social gulf setting apart the new governing hierarchy is said to be as wide as under capitalism while the difference in economic status is considerable; and last but not least, decorations are coming back. There is a saying in Moscow that the Bolshevik régime destroyed three old classes and created eighteen.

Not only is the Russian system a failure from an economic point of view; but it is an unheard-of tyranny. The people do not enjoy liberty; the secret police are everywhere; strikes are ruthlessly suppressed; individuals are shot, imprisoned, or banished for the most trivial offenses, or on suspicion only. All this follows from the doctrine of class warfare which is used as much against the peasants and workers as against the bourgeoisie. In their monumental work *Soviet Communism: A New Civilization?* the Webbs seek to excuse or palliate the infliction of sufferings which they admit are beyond human computation on the grounds that a state of war exists between the ruling Bolsheviks and immense numbers of the population. But it cannot be excused. The state of war only exists because the system the Bolsheviks seek to impose does not accord with human nature, and they are too fanatical to see the truth. Berdayev, who lived under the system until he was banished in 1922, says in *The End of Our Time*:

> Bolshevism is rationalized lunacy, a mania for the definitive regulation of life, resting on the elemental irrationality of the people. . . . Life in Russia is a prolonged torture, a consenting to be sacrificed, to martyr-

dom, to humiliation; but by this torture, this sacrifice, this martyrdom Russia is making retribution for her sins and working out her salvation; there is already an unbroken spiritual activity, a moral resistance to the poison which taints the very breath of life. But the Communist authority enforces obedience by means of hunger and other coercion, and it is hard for the weak to resist. I am astonished when I think of the indignant complaints called forth by the notorious tyranny and lack of liberty under the old régime: there was tremendous freedom in those days compared with what we have under the Soviets.

In his book *Piatiletka** Farbman tells us that Lenin knew within a few weeks that the Revolution had failed,** but it was not until 1921 when the attempt to establish Communism led to famine that he could persuade his colleagues to abandon the attempt in favor of the New Economic Policy, which legalized private trading and made the establishment of Collectivism the immediate object of Bolshevik policy. But a few months after Lenin's death, in January, 1924, his policy was reversed as regards private trading and the Bolsheviks embarked on a second struggle to realize the impossible, from which they are in full retreat today – but only after nearly two millions of people have been put to death and millions have perished of famine. It is a fine comment on the wisdom of the Bolsheviks that it needed such enormous sacrifices to bring them to something like reason.

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* *Piatiletka* by Michael Farbman. Farbman was a Russian journalist who spent his time between London and Moscow supplying information about Russia to the English press and information about England to the Russian press. He died three or four years ago.

** Perhaps Lenin's knowledge that the Revolution had failed, its terrible consequences, and his sense of responsibility in the matter account for the strange laughter that so many of his interviewers remarked upon: to laugh was to relieve his feelings.

That the Russian experiment is a ghastly failure there can be no doubt. Yet in spite of its failure there is a widespread drift toward Communism, especially in partly industrialized countries. How, then, are we to explain this increasing espousal of Communism in the face of Communism's inability to meet its promises? It is to be explained in the first place by the fact that, in spite of local and temporary improvements, the world economic situation gets steadily worse, and as no sure leadership is to be found within existing political parties, including moderate Socialist ones, Communism presents itself to great numbers as the only hope. Another factor is that the workers do not believe Communism has failed. Their fatal habit of treating all critics, friendly and unfriendly, as hostile to the working class has concealed from them the reality. The workers see that industrialism is breaking up, and all they see in such criticism is the attempt to persuade them to continue to submit to their slavery when the opportunity to escape has arrived. Industrialism has de-humanized and de-spiritualized the workers, and the drift toward Communism, where it is to be seen among them, is finally nothing more than a psychological reaction against the degrading conditions of employment to which they have to submit. Industrialism must reap as it has sown. "Revenge," said Herodotus, "is the one law of history."

The life of the industrial workers is hard. Divorced alike from religion, art, and nature and their wholesome and refining influences they become "hard, narrow, logical, irreligious, uncultured, keen on material things, indifferent to spiritual values. Life expresses itself to them as a conflict of power. Life is power. They are down because the other side has the power to keep them down. Right and wrong appear to them as feeble abstractions which do not apply. This they feel not as a matter of opinion but of life."* And feeling this they are impatient with all who would disillusion them about Russia. Though Russia is a drab and sordid reality, its propaganda is idealistic, and just in so far as life is for the industrial workers harsh and grinding, colorless and ugly, that propaganda has a strong appeal. The ideal commonwealth which it foreshadows satisfies the emotional need of men whose present lives are shaped by mechanization. They do not want details of programs, practical proposals for bridging the gulf between the present and the future, but the four-square gospel of Communism, with its promise of earthly salvation. Thus out of the insecurity and sordidness of their lives comes a burning idealism which compensates them for what they have missed in life and gives promise of revenge for what they have suffered. In this state of exultation they swallow Marx without tasting him because Marx alone among the economists of his day defended the class war; and they prepare to jump out of the frying pan into the fire.**

Among the workers, then, the spread of Communism is a reaction against factory conditions combined with the hope of revenge which the supposed success of the Russian experiment has awakened. Among students and other young people it is due to lack of prospects in life and uncertainty as to the future, and to the fact that the orthodox economics they are taught cannot throw a particle of light on the problem which confronts them, thus leaving them defenseless against Bolshevik propaganda; and so they are ready to join any movement to overthrow the intangible tyranny which oppresses them. They also are the victims of machinery; their difficulties are to be connected with the displacement of labor by machinery.

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* *The Triumphant Machine* by R. M. Fox, pp. 19-20.

** Cf. Ibid, Chap. IV. This is an important book. Its author was a factory worker and writes from experience. As a study in industrial psychology it is, so far as my knowledge extends, without a rival.

It comes about this way. It is evident that as machine production extends its area, and handicraft is destroyed, it obliges almost everybody who is under the necessity of earning a living to attempt to get a footing in the class higher than the one in which he was born. The immediate effect of machine production was to increase enormously the number of commercial travellers, shopkeepers, and middlemen of various kinds. Throughout the nineteenth century such people, who largely constituted the middle class, became very prosperous, for a large proportion of the increased wealth of the community found its way into their hands. But a point came when the limit of expansion of this class was reached. It happened in different countries at different times; in England it happened in the opening years of the century. From that time the increase of the middle class has been accompanied by an increase in the pressure of competition. As the rising generation of the middle class could not go back to handicraft owing to the spread of machine production, it pressed forward into the professions.

It is true that other influences have been at work, such as the desire of the more prosperous tradesmen to secure social prestige by educating their sons for the professions; but the economic pressure which followed the unrestricted use of machinery has increasingly driven them in this upward direction by forcing upon the rising generation the choice between struggling for a living in the professions or being enslaved as a clerk or shop assistant in some large concern which had come into existence by swallowing smaller ones. Needless to say every member of the class who was in a position to do so chose to fight in the professions. Since the War, owing to the increase of automatic machinery, this process has been accelerated to such a degree that the professions no longer provide a path of escape from the devastating machines for an ever increasing number, and a situation has been created that the Communists find it easy to exploit. In Germany a like situation was exploited by the Nazis. It is said that in Germany sixty per cent of the university graduating classes could find nothing to do.

There remain the parlor Bolsheviks, the well-to-do people who support Communism for sentimental reasons, examples of the "higher lunacy". They also are the products of machinery but in a very different way from the working class or the unemployed graduates. Their trouble is one of which they are scarcely conscious. It is that machinery has caused them to lead such artificial lives that they have lost touch with reality; they are completely lost amid the complexities of modern life. Only people who have held fast to tradition can in such artificial circumstances retain some grip of life, and they have thrown overboard tradition completely, with the result that they are left without any standards of thought, at the mercy of every whim and change of intellectual fashion. In their youth they surrendered to the current because they had no idea how to steer against it, and did not want to be thought stupid. It was so comforting to be progressive. At a later date they made the discovery that the progressivism to which they subscribed was empty of contents; it left them entirely defenseless against Bolshevik propaganda which met them half-way and so they took a leap in the dark and espoused the cause of Bolshevism. And in the dark they are likely to remain, for they know nothing of Bolshevism, and are not likely to, for without intellectual standards they are incapable of weighing the evidence so necessary to sound judgement. They are the kind of people who take trips to Russia in the hope of getting enlightenment. If we can accept the story of Mr. Malcolm Muggeridge in his book *Winter in Moscow*, they are spoofed when they get there. For my own part I find no difficulty in accepting it. What happens to them is the kind of thing I should expect to happen to Innocents Abroad. But what Mr. Muggeridge says means nothing to them. They are bent on suicide, spiritual and economic, and there is no stopping them. No doubt they get a thrill out of it. But it may prove to be a very expensive one. It is interesting in this connection to recall the fact that before he went to Moscow Mr. Muggeridge was a Communist. Readers of *Winter in*

Moscow will know what opinions of Russia in particular and Communism in general Mr. Muggeridge entertained when he came back.

The crudeness of the Bolsheviks' propaganda is a thing of the past. They have learned the lessons of experience and are much more subtle in their methods. They are learning the wisdom of the serpent or shall we say of the Fabian Society. In England they no longer spend their time attacking the Labor Party but seek to become members, in the hope of controlling it from within; and they seek to permeate and control trade unions and other democratic bodies. In France at the recent elections (May, 1936), they secured the support of the peasantry in many constituencies by telling them they had no intention of interfering with their ownership of the land, regardless of the fact that in Russia after similar promises the Bolsheviks took the land away from the peasantry once they were firmly seated in the saddle. In Spain their policy is not to attempt the seizure of power at once, but to cooperate with other parties of the Popular Front; to do their best to make any coalition government impossible; and then when the situation becomes desperate to urge the impossibility of any but a Communist solution. But the most unscrupulous thing of which they are guilty is to present the improvements which have followed the abandonment of Communism as its fruit.

There remains the question which must be answered: If the attempt to establish Communism in Russia has failed and the leading Bolsheviks are, as I am told, disillusioned men, why should they be so anxious for other countries to adopt a system that has proved so ruinous? There are two reasons. The first is that they are afraid of the designs of Germany and Japan and want military alliances; the second is that they are possessed of an envious hatred of liberty and well-being, and a depraved desire to drag all down into the pit into which they have fallen.

(To be Continued)

What Is a Traditional Society?

ALLEN TATE

[*The Phi Beta Kappa Address at the University of Virginia, June, 1936.*]

NOT long ago, I hope with no sinister purpose, I used the word tradition before a group of Southern men who had met to discuss the problems of the South. A gentleman from North Carolina rose; he said that tradition is meaningless, and he moved that we drop it. I have a certain sympathy with that view, because many features of our lives that we call traditions are meaningless, because we confuse with tradition external qualities which are now, in our rich American middle class, mere stage properties of a way of life than can no longer be lived. For the stage-set differs from the natural scene, I take it, in offering us a conventional surface without depth, and the additional facility of allowing us to stand before it on Saturday and Sunday and to resume on Monday the real business of life. Tradition as we see it today has little to do with the real business of life; at best it can make that grim reality two-sevenths less grim – if indeed the pretense of our week-end traditionalists is not actually grimmer than the reality they apologetically prefer and from which they desire, part of the time, to escape.

I do not understand this romanticism, and I bring it to your attention because, here within the walls of Mr. Jefferson's University, there is a special tradition of realism in thinking about the nature of tradition.

The presiding spirit of that tradition was clear in his belief that the way of life and the livelihood of men must be the same, that the way we make our living must dictate the way of life, that our way of getting a living is not good enough for us if we are driven by it to pretend that it is something else, that we cannot pretend to be landed gentlemen two days of the week if we are middle-class capitalists the five others. You will remember Ruskin's objection to the Gothic factory-architecture of his age – what ornamentation he urged should be used around the cornice of a kind of building that was new in that time. Ruskin's stylized money-bags set at the right ryhthmic intervals around the cornices of the Bethlehem Steel Corporation might be symbolic of something going on inside, but I think the Chairman of the Board might rightly object that Ruskin was not a good satirist, but merely a sentimentalist, and the Chairman would leave his cornices bare. Committed on the one hand to an economic realism, he might on the other indulge himself in softer materials in another direction; he might buy or build a Georgian mansion somewhere near Middleburg, and add to it – if they were not already there – the correct row of columns that Mr. Jefferson adapted to Virginia after a visit to the Vieux Carré at Nîmes.

Mr. Jefferson could not know Ruskin, but he knew about mediaeval Europe, and he disliked it. He never visited Mr. Walpole at Strawberry Hill, but I wish he had. He would have rejoiced that Walpole's week-end Gothic – if you will allow the anachronism for the sake of the moral – meant the final destruction, in England, of the Middle Ages. He would have known that to revive something is to hasten its destruction –

if it is not sufficiently revived. The moment the past becomes picturesque it is dead. I do not agree with Mr. Jefferson about the Middle Ages, but I surmise that he would have considered a revival of the past very much in this light. He himself was trying to revive the small freeholder who had been dispossessed by the rising capitalist of the eighteenth century.

One of the curious features of our mentality since the Renaissance is the historical imagination. No other civilization, I believe, has had this gift. I use the term not in a strict sense, but in a very general sense, and perhaps not a wholly good sense. I mean that with the revival of Greek studies men in Europe began to pose as Greeks. After a couple of centuries, when the pose, too heroic to last, grew tired, they posed as Romans of the Republic. There we have a nice historical dramatization of the common sense of the eighteenth century. We were not unaffected by it. Indeed there is evidence that our Revolutionary fathers were the noblest Romans of them all. There is certainly not a Virginian here, nor a Southerner of Virginian ancestry, whose great-great-grandfather did not write letters to his son in the style of Addison, a vehicle nicely fitted to convey the matter of Cicero. *Libidinosa enim et intemperous adulescentia effetum corpus tradit senectuti* — it is not from the orations, but the rhythm and sentiment here were the model of the *ore orotundo* style that dominated society in the South and even other parts of America for three generations. These generations, if our records of their more elegant representatives do not lie, were not much impressed with the ravages of youthful license upon the body, which, as Cicero has just told us, passes wearily into old age. The young blade of Albemarle of 1770, sitting over a punch-bowl in the tavern after a day of Cicero with the learned Parson Douglas, was not, at that moment, an exemplar of Cicero's morals, but I suspect that his conversation, even after the bottom of the bowl began to be visible, retained a few qualities of the Ciceronian style.

The style is the point of a digression that I shall hope you do not think frivolous. I hold no brief for Cicero – he is a dull mind in any language – but I do hold that the men of the early American Republic had a profound instinct for high style, a genius for dramatizing themselves at their own particular moment of history. They were so situated economically and politically that they were able to form a definite conception of their human rôle: they were not ants in an economic ant-hill, nor were they investigating statistically the behavior of other ants. They knew what they wanted because they knew what they, themselves, were. They lived in a social and economic system that permitted them to develop a human character that functioned all the time, not merely two days a week; and it functioned in every level of life, from the economic process to the county horse-race.

The Virginian of the 1790's might have found a better dramatic part than that of the Roman in *toga virilis* – as Mr. Custis, the first Southern dilettante, liked to paint him – but it was the easiest rôle to lay hold upon at that time, and it was distinctly better than no imaginative version of himself at all. My distinguished contemporary, Mr. T. S. Eliot, a few years ago told an audience at this University that there are two kinds of mythology, a higher and a lower. The

Roman *toga* of our early Republic was doubtless of a kind of lower mythology, inferior to the higher mythology of the Christian thirteenth century, and I suppose Mr. Eliot would prefer the higher vision, as I myself should were I allowed a preference. But we must remember that the rationalism of the eighteenth century had made myths of all ranks exceedingly scare, as the romantic century had made myths of all ranks exceedingly scarce, as the romantic poets were beginning to testify; yet the Virginian did remarkably well with the minor myth that his age permitted him to cultivate. Mr. Custis's paintings may seem to us to be afflicted with a sort of aesthetic giantism, and his blank verse dramas, in which every hero is an alabaster Washington named Marcus Tullius Scipio Americanus, are unreadable today. They must have been a kind of inexquisite torture even when they were written. But Mr. Custis built Arlington, and Arlington is something to have built. He could not have built it, of course, if Mr. Jefferson had not first built a house upon a place that I believe is locally called the Little Mountain; but then Mr. Jefferson could not have built Monticello had he not been dominated by the lower myth of the *toga virilis*.

Perhaps this lower myth, from whatever source it may come — Rome, Greece, the age of Cellini, the naturalism of the South Seas, or even the Old South — this little myth is a figment of the historical imagination, that curious faculty of Western men that I have already mentioned. The men of our early Republic were powerfully endowed in this faculty. It is not the same as a religion, if by religion we mean Christianity in the Middle Ages; nor is it the same as the religious imagination under any conceivable culture, for the religious imagination is timeless and unhistoric. The minor myth is based upon ascertainable history.

There is a chart that we might look at for a moment, but only for a moment; I offer it not as history, but as a device to ease the strain of the idea of traditional society that I am trying to give in so short a space. First, there is the religious imagination, which can mythologize indiscriminately history, legend, trees, the sea, animals, all being humanly dramatized, somehow converted to the nature of man. Secondly, there is the historical imagination, which is the religious imagination *manqué* – an exercise of the myth-making propensity of man within the restricted realm of historical fact. Men see themselves in the stern light of the character of Cato, but they can no longer see themselves under the control of a tutelary deity. Cato actually lived; Apollo was merely far-darting.

The third stage is the complete triumph of rationalism. And with the complete triumph of rationalism, in our own time, we get, in place of so workable a makeshift as the historical imagination, merely a truncation of that phrase in which the adjective has declared its independence. It has set up for a noun. Under rationalism we get just plain, everyday history. If this is an obscure conception, I must hasten to say that although history cannot write itself, although it must be written by men whose minds are immune as little to prejudice as to the law of contradiction, it is true that any sort of imagination is entirely out of this picture. Yet in recognition of history's impotence to bring itself into being, the historians give us a new word: method. We live in the age of the historical method. Method brings history into being.

I shall not labor the point here, but I do think it is fair to say that *history*, although it has become attached to *method*, is still a noun of agency, as the grammarians call it, trying to do its own work. I think this is true simply because on principle scientific *method* is itself not attached to anything. It is just abstract method – from which plain, abstract, inhuman history differs not by a hair. Of course, I am talking about the historian's ideal of physical law – his belief that history must conform to the ideal of a normative science, whether or not it can mean anything written that way. The historical method then may be briefly described – by one who does not believe in its use – as the way of discovering historical "truths" that are true in some other world than that inhabited by the historian and his fellow men: truths, in a word, that are true for the historical method.

Now most of you have read *The Waste Land*, but I shall ask you to hear a passage from it again for the sake of those who have not read it.

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne
Glowed on the marble, where the glass
Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
From which a golden Cupidon peeped out
(Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
Reflecting light upon the table as
The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
From satin cases poured in rich profusion;
In vials of ivory and colored glass
Unstoppered, lurked her strange synthetic perfumes.

In this charming *décor* the lady, I imagine, is about to dress for dinner. On the walls and ceiling are scenes from our heroic past:

Huge sea-wood fed with copper
Burned green and orange, framed by the colored stone,
In which sad light a carved dolphin swam.
Above the antique mantel was displayed
As though a window gave upon the sylvan scene
The change of Philomel, by the barbarous king
So rudely forced; yet there the nightingale
Filled all the desert with inviolable voice. . . .

People living in such favorable influences, partaking of the best of our history, and of the most charming art of the great tradition, command our most interested attention: they will at least exhibit the benefits of a good lower mythology. We may expect them to show us, if not the innocence of the religious imagination, a high style that expresses, or is the expression of, the walls that we have just looked at. But no; the poet warns us as follows:

> *And other withered stumps of time*
> *Were told upon the walls; staring forms*
> *Leaned out, leaning, hushing the room enclosed.*
> *Footsteps shuffled on the stair.*

I hope you will forgive me if I venture to think that the shuffling feet are about to bring into the room the historical method. For, after some desperately aimless conversation, in which both the woman and the man seem to feel little but a bored exhaustion and vacuity of purpose, the woman suddenly says:

"What shall I do now? What shall I do.
"I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street

"With my hair down, so. What shall we do tomorrow?
"What shall we ever do?"

Her companion replies – and I ask you to place what he says against the heroic background of Renaissance art on the ceiling and walls: what he says does reduce it, I think, to withered stumps of time:

The hot water at ten.
And if it rains, a closed car at four.
And we shall play a game of chess,
Pressing lidless eyes, and waiting for a knock upon the door.

Now fortunately upon this occasion I am neither poet nor literary critic. Here I am a moralist, and if I find more to my use in Mr. Eliot's poem than he would willingly allow, you will remember that moralists these days are desperate persons, and must squeeze a moral even out of modern poetry. If the chess-game seems trivial as a symbol of aimless intellectuality, its intention is nevertheless just. The rich experience of the great tradition depicted in the room receives a violent shock in contrast with a game that symbolizes the inhuman abstraction of the modern mind. In proposing the game of chess the man is proposing an exercise in a kind of truth that has no meaning for either of them. The woman in this remarkable scene has just said she can think of nothing to do – the moralist here would gloss that as lack of purpose – and she intends to rush out into the street with her hair down.

What does this mean? It means that in ages which suffer the decay of manners, religion, morals, codes, our indestructible vitality demands expression in violence and chaos; it means that men who have lost both the higher myth of religion and the lower myth of historical dramatization have lost the forms of human action; it means that they are no longer capable of defining a human objective, of forming a dramatic conception of human nature; it means that they capitulate from their human rôle to a series of pragmatic conquests which, taken alone, are true only in some other world than that inhabited by men.

The woman in Mr. Eliot's poem is, I believe, the symbol of man at the present time. He is surrounded by the grandeurs of the past, but he does not participate in them; they do not sustain him. To complete the allegory, the man represents a kind of truth that I have described in very general terms as the historical method: he offers us the exercise of intellect to no purpose, a game that we cannot relate to our conduct, an instrument of power over both past and present which we can neither control nor use.

Man in this plight lives in an untraditional society. For an untraditional society does not permit its members to pass to the next generation what it received from its immediate past. Why is this so? I have tried to describe in moral terms some of the defects of life in an untraditional society – and I expect merely to ask and not to answer, whether there is not some kind of analysis that we may subject our situation to, that will show us one way of understanding the fundamental difference between tradition and non-tradition.

I shall return to a question that I asked in the beginning. Why do many modern people live one kind of life five days a week and another the two other days? Why is it that a middle-class capitalist from Pittsburgh or Birmingham desires an ante-bellum

Georgian house near Lexington, Kentucky, or Middleburg, Virginia? And why was it that the men who built those houses desired only those houses, and made serious objections in the eighteen-sixties to being forcibly removed from them? There are many answers to these questions, but I have space for only one. The middle-class capitalist has no confidence in the material basis of his life; his human nature demands a homogeneous pattern of behavior that his economic life will not give him. He doubtless sees in the remains of the Old South a symbol of the homogeneous life. But the ante-bellum man saw no difference between the Georgian house and the economic basis that supported it. It was all of one piece.

I am exaggerating, but permit me the exaggeration so that I may make this matter as clear as I can. Man has never achieved a perfect unity of his moral nature and his economics; yet he had never failed quite so dismally in that greatest of all human tasks as he is failing now. Ante-bellum man, in so far as he achieved a unity between his moral nature and his livelihood, was a traditional man. He dominated the means of life; he was not dominated by it. I think the distinguishing feature of a traditional society is simply that. In order to make a livelihood men do not have to put aside their moral natures. Traditional men are never quite making their living, and they never quite cease to make it. Or put otherwise: they are making their living all the time, and affirming their humanity all the time. The whole economic basis of life is closely bound up with moral behavior, and it is possible to behave morally all the time. It is this principle that is the center of the philosophy of Jefferson.

Yet what is there traditional about this? The answer is that if such a society could come into being now, and had no past whatever, it would be traditional because it could hand something on. That something would be a moral conception of man in relation to the material of life. The material basis of life, in such a society, is not hostile to the perpetuation of a moral code, as our finance-capitalist economics unquestionably is. It is an old story by this time that our modern economic system can be operated efficiently regardless of the moral stature of the men who operate it.

The kind of property that sustains the traditional society is not only *not* hostile to a unified moral code; it is positively the basis of it. Moreover it is the medium, just as canvas is the medium of a painter, through which that code is passed to the next generation. For traditional property is the expression of man's moral nature. Finance-capitalism, a system that has removed men from the responsible control of the means of livelihood, is necessarily hostile to the development of a moral nature. Morality is responsibility to a given set of conditions. The further the modern system develops in the direction that it has taken for two generations – the more anti-traditional our society will become, and the more difficult it will be to pass on the fragments of the traditions that we inherit.

The higher myth of religion, the lower myth of history, even ordinary codes of conduct, cannot preserve themselves; indeed they do not exist apart from our experience. Since the most significant feature of our experience is the way we make our living, the economic basis of life is the soil out of which all the forms, good or bad, of our experience must come.

The Case Against Corruption

Cecil Chesterton and the Marconi Scandal: A Chapter of Autobiography

G. K. CHESTERTON

MY BROTHER, Cecil Edward Chesterton, was born when I was about five years old; and, after a brief pause, began to argue. He continued to argue to the end; for I am sure that he argued energetically with the soldiers among whom he died, in the last glory of the Great War. It is reported of me that when I was told that I possessed a brother, my first thoughts went to my own interminable taste for reciting verses, and that I said: "That's all right; now I shall always have an audience." If I did say this, I was in error. My brother was by no means disposed to be merely an audience; and frequently forced the function of an audience upon me. More frequently still, perhaps it was a case of there being simultaneously two orators and no audience. We argued throughout our boyhood and youth until we became the pest of our whole social circle. We shouted at each other across the table, on the subject of Parnell or Puritanism or Charles the First's head, until our nearest and dearest fled at our approach, and we had a desert around us. And though it is not a matter of undiluted pleasure to recall having been so horrible a nuisance, I am rather glad in other ways that we did so early thrash out our own thoughts on almost all the subjects in the world. I am also glad to think that through all those years we never stopped arguing; and we never once quarrelled.

Perhaps the principal objection to a quarrel is that it interrupts an argument. Anyhow, our argument was never interrupted until it began to reach its conclusion in the proper form; which is conviction. I do not say that at any particular moment either of us would have admitted being in error; but as a matter of fact, it was through that incessant process of disagreement that we came at last to agree. He began as a more mutinous sort of Pagan, a special enemy of the Puritan, a defender of Bohemian enjoyments, sociable but entirely secular. I began with more disposition to defend in a vague way the Victorian idealism, and even to say a word for Puritan religion, chiefly from a dim subconscious sympathy with any sort of religion. But in fact, by a process of elimination, we came more and more to think that the same sort of non-Puritan religion was the more plausible and promising; and to end eventually, but quite independently, in the same Church. I think it was a good thing that we had tested every link of logic by mutual hammering. I will even add something that sounds too like a boast; though it is meant to be a tribute. I will say that the man, who had got used to arguing with Cecil Chesterton, has never since had any reason to fear an argument with anybody.

The editor of *The New Statesman*, an acute critic of quite a different school from ours, said to me a little while ago; "Your brother was the very finest *debater* I have ever heard or heard of"; and such editors, of course, had known all the politicians and popular speakers. The qualities of his speaking were those of logic and lucidity combined with a sort of violent and startling courage. Indeed, he illustrated what I think is a common error on the subject of logic. The logician is too often presented as a prig; as a thin and frigid person of a pallid complexion. Both in experience and history, I have generally found that it was very full-blooded and warm-hearted people who had that gift of clear and connected thought. Charles Fox was like that; Danton was like that; and Cecil Chesterton was certainly like that. He had all that I have described as the Chesterton simplicity and steadiness in his personal relations; his affections were particularly fixed and tranquil; but in battle he had a sort of bull-necked pugnacity and intolerance. He did not seem to wish to live and leave a fallacy alive; he certainly could not leave a fallacy alone. The development of his political ideas was for a time decidedly divergent from my own. When I went to work with the Pro-Boers of *The Daily News*, and generally upheld the Liberal cause, though rather more romantically than many Liberals, he gravitated to a sort of practical Tory Democracy, which was more and more permeated by the Socialism of Sidney Webb and Bernard Shaw. He eventually became an active and effective member of the Fabian Executive. But what was much more important, he had within him a living and most menacing sort of intolerance; a hatred of the real corruptions and hypocrisies of modern politics, and an extraordinary idea of telling the truth.

I have already indicated that I myself, though I believed in Liberalism, was finding it dimly difficult to believe in Liberals. It would be truer, perhaps, to say that I was finding it difficult to believe in politics;

because the reality seemed almost unreal, as compared with the reputation or the report. I could give twenty instances to indicate what I mean; but they would be no more than indications, because the doubt itself was doubtful. I remember going to a great Liberal club, and walking about in a large crowded room, somewhere at the end of which a bald gentleman with a beard was reading something from a manuscript in a low voice. It was hardly unreasonable that we did not listen to him, because we could not in any case have heard; but I think a very large number of us did not even see him. We shifted and shunted about and collided with each other; I met various friends of mine and exchanged a few words; Bentley and Belloc and Hammond and the rest. We talked in an ordinary fashion; it is possible, though not certain, that one or other of us asked carelessly what was supposed to be happening in the other corner of the large hall. Then we drifted away together, talking about important things, or things which seemed to us important.

Next morning I saw across the front of my Liberal paper in gigantic headlines the phrase; "Lord Spencer Unfurls the Banner". Under this were other remarks, also in large letters, about how he had blown the trumpet for Free Trade and how the blast would ring through England and rally all the Free Traders. It did appear, on careful examination, that the inaudible remarks which the old gentleman had read from the manuscript were concerned with economic arguments for Free Trade; and very excellent arguments too, for all I know. But the contrast between what that orator was to the people who heard him, and what he was to the thousands of newspaper-readers who did not hear him, was so huge a hiatus and disproportion that I do not think I ever quite got over it. I knew henceforward what was meant, or what might be meant, by a Scene in the House or a Challenge from the Platform or any of those sensational events which take place in the newspapers and nowhere else.

This sense of unreality in the party struggle, which was gradually growing upon me, grew much more swiftly on my brother and my friend Belloc; because they were by temperament of a more rapid and resolute sort. They entered into a kind of partnership for the study of the question; and the outcome of that partnership was a book which had a considerable effect; though at that time, of course, it was mostly an effect of irritation or incredulity. They collaborated in a work called *The Party System*; of which the general thesis was that there were really no Parties, though there certainly was a system. The system, according to this view, was essentially one of rotation; but of rotation revolving on a central group, which really consisted of the leading politicians on both sides; or, as they were called for convenience in the book, "The Front Benches". An unreal conflict was kept up for the benefit of the public, and to a certain extent with the innocent assistance of the rank and file; but the Leader of the House was more truly in partnership with the Leader of the Opposition than either of them was with his own followers, let alone his own constituents. This was the thesis maintained in the book; and for the moment its immediate importance in this narrative is not so much concerned with its truth or falsehood as with the personal results arising from the alliance of its two authors. For the point of view attracted sufficient attention to lead a few supporters to launch a weekly paper; of which Belloc was the editor and Cecil Chesterton the sub-editor; and to which I contributed first an occasional and eventually a weekly article.

There had never been anything like *The Eye-Witness* in England before; certainly not within the memory of the oldest men then living. Nor indeed has there ever been anything like it in England since. But its novelty and originality cannot be measured by those who can only compare it with what has happened in England since. It is a paradox palpably true that an original thing cannot at once be successful and still seem original. We can never appreciate how startling it might sound to be told that the earth was round, if we had really and invariably thought it was flat. By this time, so to speak, its roundness has become more flat than its flatness. It has become a dull platitude and only the denial of it would disturb us. So it is with political revolutions; and so it was with the considerable revolution introduced by *The Eye-Witness* in English journalism. Nobody can measure the change who was not brought up, as I was, in the ordinary newspaper-reading middle class of the Victorian Age. We need not argue here about all that may be said for and against the idealism, or the optimism, or the sentimentalism, or the hypocrisy or the virtue of the Victorian Age. It is enough to say that it rested solidly on some social convictions, that were not only conventions. One of them was the belief that English politics were not only free from politcal corruption, but almost entirely free from personal motives about money. It was a point of patriotic pride that set a limit to the fiercest movements of party anger. I can remember that old Tories like my grandfather would actually pause in the full sweep of their denunciations of the demoniac conduct of Mr. Gladstone, to wave away the faintest suggestion that there could be any fiends rending the souls of our statesmen less erected, as Milton says, than the fiends of ambition or jealousy; "Heaven forbid that I should suggest that any English Prime Minister. . . ." No; Frenchmen might have discovered the negotiable value of coins of the realm; Italians and Austrians might think it well worth while to double their income; the statesmen of Bulgaria or Bolivia might have some notion of the meaning of money; but English politicians passed their lives in an absent-minded trance, like that of Mr. Skimpole, kept their eyes fixed on the fixed stars, never enquired whether politics had made them richer or poorer; and received their salaries with a start of surprise.

Well, for good or evil, that is all dead. And what killed it was primarily the journalistic explosion called *The Eye-Witness*; and especially its dealings with the Marconi Case and the question of the Sale of Peerages. In one sense indeed, as I shall suggest in a moment, the world fell far short of following up the lead of those particular leaders; and there has been nothing since recalling their pointed and personal denunciations. But the general tone has entirely altered. Everybody is familiar with jeers against politicians, jokes about political payments, journalistic allusions to the sale of honors or the Secret Party Fund; above all nobody is now shocked by them. Perhaps it would be better if they were shocked, or in other words shamed by them. If they were ashamed of them, they might possibly make some attempt to alter them. For that is the weak side of the ultimate result of the revelations. The object of *The Eye-Witness* was to make the English public know and care about the peril of political corruption. It is now certain that the public does know. It is not so certain that the public does care. And we may well warn the more cynical and realistic generation around us not to be too confident in its superiority to the hoodwinked and humbug-ridden nineteenth century. I know that my Victorian uncles did not know how England is really governed. But I have a strong suspicion that if my Victorian uncles had known, they would have been horrified and not amused; and they would have put a stop to it somehow. Nobody is trying to put a stop to it now.

It is the fashion to divide recent history into pre-War and post-War conditions. I believe it is almost as essential to divide them into the pre-Marconi and post-Marconi days. It was during the agitations upon that affair that the ordinary English citizen lost his invincible ignorance; or, in ordinary language, his innocence. And as I happened to play a part, secondary indeed but definite, in the quarrel about this affair, and as in any case anything that my brother did was of considerable importance to me and my affairs, it will be well to pause for a moment upon this peculiar business; which was at the time, of course, systematically misrepresented and which is still very widely misunderstood. I think it probable that centuries will pass before it is seen clearly and in its right perspective; and that then it will be seen as one of the turning-points in the history of England and the world.

There are various legends about it. One is, for instance, the legend that we denounced certain Cabinet Ministers because they gambled on the Stock Exchange. It is likely enough that we did make fun of a man like Mr. Lloyd George, who made himself the mouthpiece of the Noncomformist Conscience and called on all the chapels to show forth the old fighting Puritan spirit, when he appeared in a transaction uncommonly like a gamble; just as we should denounce a politician who drank champagne and tried to start a campaign of Prohibition. But we should not denounce him for drinking champagne but for prohibiting champagne. Similarly, we should not denounce a Puritan politician for gambling, so much as for talking as if nobody could ever gamble. My brother, I need not say, was not likely to be shocked at anybody indulging in a bet or a wager; though he might possibly have recommended him to do a flutter on the Derby or the Oaks rather than on the Stock Exchange. But, as a fact, the whole notion that the question was one of merely doing a flutter is a fiction. It is a fiction, which was put up by the politicians at the time, as a mask for the fact. The charge against the Marconi Ministers was that they received a tip, or were "let in on the ground floor", as the financial phrase goes, by a Government contractor whose contract was at the time being considered or accepted by the Government. In fact, on the face of it at any rate, there were all the conditions that go to make up what is commonly called "a secret commission". Whether the acceptance of the tip did or did not affect the acceptance of the contract might be argued; but the question at issue was one of a contract and a tip, and not of an ordinary little flutter in stocks and shares. The pivotal fact of the position, of course, was that the Government contractor was the brother of one of these members of the Government. The very extraordinary monopoly which the Government then granted to the Marconi Company was in fact granted to its managing director, Mr. Godfrey Isaacs, the brother of Sir Rufus Isaacs, then the Attorney General. These facts alone justified at least inquiry; and the first efforts of all the politicians were directed to preventing any inquiry at all.

Until the editor of *The Eye-Witness* forced the politicians to reveal something, the politicians had begun by protesting that there was nothing whatever to reveal. Mr. Lloyd George spoke of mere rumors, by implication of baseless rumors, "Passing from one foul lip to another". The particular Samuel who happened to be doing a Ministerial job at the moment got up and gratuitously asserted that none of his colleagues had ever had any financial connection with this company; alluding in a distant manner to the Marconi Company. Sir Rufus Isaacs made the same distant denial in almost the same words; in fact he drew quite a quaint picture of the far-off, the almost frigid relations between himself and Mr. Godfrey Isaacs; and spoke of having once met his brother "at a family function" and heard for the first time of the success of his Government contract. Meanwhile my brother, who had succeeded to the full editorship of the paper and renamed it *The New Witness*, continued a confessedly violent, not to say abusive, attack on the Isaacses, but latterly and largely on the previous career of Mr. Godfrey Isaacs as a promoter of ephemeral companies. Eventually, Mr. Godfrey Isaacs prosecuted my brother for the personal libel on himself; much to my brother's delight. It is a rather remarkable fact that on the very day that my brother's reply was received, announcing that he intended to justify or prove his statement, the politicians took the first step towards telling some of the truth. The step may at first sight seem odd. It consisted of prosecuting for libel a French paper called *Le Matin*.

It seems odd; because there were some very conspicuous English papers to be prosecuted. There was *The New Witness*, roaring aloud week after week to be prosecuted. There was *The Morning Post*, which said many things nearly as strong; there was Mr. Maxse, in *The National Review*, who said things quite as strong. I was myself so much amused with the inconsequence of this foreign diversion that I published some verses in *The New Witness* beginning:

I am so swift to seize affronts,
My spirit is so high,
Who ever has insulted me
Some foreigner must die.
I made a claim for damage
(For The Times *had called me "thief")*
Against a paper in Alsace,
A paper called "Le Juif".
And when The Morning Post *unearthed*
Some murders I'd devised,
A Polish organ of finance
At once apologized.
. . . I know it sounds confusing
But, as Mr. Lammle said,
The anger of a gentleman
Is boiling in my head.

The actual method of course is by this time familiar enough. Some fool who has got the facts wrong is always prosecuted, instead of the serious critics who have got the facts right. And, in the case of *Le Matin*, the occasion was merely used as an opportunity for the Ministers involved to give their own version of the real facts before it was too late. To the profound astonishment and distress of many, they admitted that, in spite of the reassuring remarks in Parliament, they had in fact received a large number of shares from the American branch of the Marconi Company. Most of the loyal Liberals who followed them were rather flabbergasted; but in the ordinary Party press the matter was duly whitewashed. Of course the ordinary Tory press would have done exactly the same with an ordinary Tory scandal, of which there were quite as many. But I should like to name and record here, *honoris causa* and for the credit of himself and the true Radical creed, the name of the late H. W. Massingham, the editor of *The Nation*, who alone in such a crisis spoke and acted like a man. He was as devoted to the Party of Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform as any of the others; but his devotion took the form of an instant appreciation of its moral danger. He came home from hearing the *Matin* explanation, shaken and horror-stricken, and he printed in his paper the words, "Political corruption is the Achilles heel of Liberalism".

Attempts were made afterwards to justify all this inconsistency and contradiction, by explaining that the shares had been taken in the American branch of the enterprise, and that the Parliamentary explanations had only referred to "this Company". I must confess that I should feel very much more charity towards the fiction, if it were not for the explanation. I might easily forget and forgive, after all these years, if the politicians said they had lied as schoolboys lie, out of loyalty to their own class or club; and under certain conventions of Parliamentary self-defense; I might even think that this conventional fidelity was not so much merely dishonorable as a perverted form of honor. But if they say that a statement of that sort was not fiction, because the word "American" was suppressed, then (I grieve to say) I could only conclude that they did not know the meaning of truth. The test is perfectly simple. Suppose they had got up and told the whole simple truth saying, "These Ministers have shares in American but not in English Marconis", the result would have been a shock; which they meant to avoid and did avoid. In other words, on their own theory of their own action, they meant to deceive and did deceive. That they deceived by a verbal equivocation of the double sense of "this Company" does not make it better, but worse. However, all their moral ideas were in such confusion that we need not necessarily even believe their explanation of their explanation. Their real reason may even have been better than their false excuse; and their lie may have been more loyal than they had the courage to confess.

Another legend about the Marconi Case, floating about like a cloud and obscuring its true outline, is the notion that my brother being convicted and fined the rather nominal sum of £100 was a legal answer to the attack on the Marconi Ministers. This is, as the lawyers say, a question of law as well as fact; and in both it is quite false. Mr. Justice Phillimore, who was opposed to our case in a degree rather beyond the limits of the judicial, was nevertheless a very lucid and precise lawyer; and he left no doubt on this point whatever. In his summing up, he said most emphatically that the jury had nothing whatever to do with the question of whether the politicians had improperly dabbled in Marconis; that their verdict was not to answer that political question one way or the other; that they were concerned solely with whether the individual Godfrey Isaacs, in his career as a company-promoter previous to the Marconi Case, had been unfairly described by the individual Cecil Chesterton. The jury were strongly instructed to find, and did find, that the description of the company-promoter was wrong. But the jury did not find, and were expressly told that they were not competent to find, that the conduct of the Marconi Ministers was right.

Whatever Godfrey Isaacs was really like, he is dead now; and I certainly am not going back to dig up the poor fellow's defunct companies. There are perhaps only two things to be added to that personal part of the story; and I think they are both worth adding. One is that it is supremely characteristic of my brother that, while he undoubtedly used all the violent vocabulary of Cobbett in attacking Godfrey Isaacs and the rest, he had not in fact the faintest grain of malice, or even irritation. He always spoke of the brothers Isaacs and their set, in private conversation, with perfect good humor and charity; allowing for their Jewish virtues of family loyalty and the rest, and even finding excuses for the other politicians; though it is extremely typical of the real attitude of our group, which was accused of fanatical Anti-Semitism, that he was always more ready to excuse the Jews than the Gentiles. That is another of the legends about the Marconi Case; that it was an attack on Jews. As Mr. Belloc said, in giving evidence, anybody less like a Jew than Mr. Lloyd George it would be difficult to imagine. And there is to be added to this a curious and ironic conclusion of the matter; when, many years after, my brother received the Last Sacraments and died in a hospital in France, his old enemy, Godfrey Isaacs, died very shortly after, having been converted to the same universal Catholic Church. No one would have rejoiced more than my brother; or with less bitterness or with more simplicity. It is the only reconciliation: and it can reconcile anybody. *Requiescant in Pace*.

Finally, it may be worth noting that the last and least worthy of the legends about the Marconi Case was a notion, which I found floating about at one time, that my brother and Mr. Belloc had parted company on the matter, because Mr. Belloc in his evidence had referred the examiners to him, as responsible editor of the later issues of the paper. As one who was inside all the counsels, and was naturally prejudiced if anything on my brother's side, I may testify that there was never a word of truth in this supposed division or desertion. The policy of my brother, claiming to answer all questions himself, may have been wise or unwise; I myself had my doubts about its wisdom. But such as it was, it was adopted by him in consultation with Mr. Belloc, as a part of their common policy; and on my suggestion, my brother afterwards inserted a note in the paper explaining this simple fact. The result was simple and significant. The Commission never dared to call him at all.

For the rest, the political scandal was treated like all other political scandals. A Parliamentary Commission was appointed and reported that everything was very nice; a Minority Report was issued which reported that some things were not quite so nice; and political life (if you can call it life) went on as before. But what makes me laugh is the thought of the poor puzzled, honest and indignant Tories, who read *The Morning Post* and imagined that a Tory chivalry was storming the fortress of corrupt Radicalism, when they read the Parliamentary Debates on the subject; and especially the passage in which Arthur Balfour said that they must judge men like Lloyd George (whom they knew so well and loved so much) more leniently than they would judge a common outsider. The poor Primrose League must have been horribly mystified by the problem of this mildness on the Front Benches. They would have found the answer to the problem in a book called *The Party System.*

Soon after the affair had concluded, as such affairs always conclude in modern England, with a formal verdict and a white-washing committee, all our politics and practical life were turned upside down by the external earthquake of the Great War. There was not so complete a disconnection as some suppose; for Prussia was partly encouraged to attack by a gross exaggeration of the seriousness, I will not say of the Orangeman, but certainly of the seriousness with which the Englishman really regards the Orangeman. And that threat of civil war from Northern Ireland was very largely lashed into extravagance as an expedient for proving that the Party System did mean something after all. For a very long time past, the Irish Question has been the only life in the English Parliament. It was alive because it was concerned with religion, or with two religions; and when the Irish question was withdrawn, the English Parliamentary Party System visibly fell to pieces. But there were other ways in which the issue of corruption continued to affect the country in wartime; not least in the Dope Scandal and in the fact that firms did brazenly continue to trade with the enemy. But in truth, the evil connection went back further than that. As a fact, it goes back to the very beginning of the War, though few people even began to understand it until long afterwards.

If I were asked who produced or precipitated the Great War (in the instant sense that he prevented it being prevented), I should give an answer that would surprise nearly all sections of opinion, and almost certainly surprise the man himself. I should not say the Kaiser; for that simplification was only one of the series of British bogeys like Kruger before or Mussolini afterwards; though I am quite certain the evil originally arose with the power of Prussia. Still less should I say the Czar of Russia or some Slavonic fanatic who committed a crime at Sarajevo. Long after the acts and attitudes of all these people were recognized, it would have been perfectly possible to avoid the War; and nearly everybody wanted to avoid it. I should say that the fire-eater, who precipitated it when others might have prevented it, was some sort of worthy Quaker of the type of old Mr. Cadbury, whom I knew and served in my youth.

And it all arose out of the existence of the Party System; or rather, in a sense, out of the non-existence of the Party System. When the public theory of a thing is different from the practical reality of that thing, there is always a convention of silence that cannot be broken; there are things that must not be said in public. The fact concealed in this case exactly illustrated the thesis of the book called *The Party System*; that there were not two real parties ruling alternately, but one real group, "the Front Benches", ruling all the time. The fact here was that the foreign policy of Asquith and Grey did not vitally differ from that which would have been pursued by Balfour and Bonar Law. All were patriots upon this point; all were, in my personal opinion, right; but anyhow, all thought that England would have to intervene if Germany threatened France. They all thought so; and if they had all said so, and said so months before, Germany would never have challenged the power of such an alliance. My brother and many millions more would be walking about alive.

The Liberal leaders could not say so; not even for fear of the Liberal Party, let alone the people; but for fear of the particular and powerful forces which supported the Liberal Party; and therefore supported the Party System. And under the conditions of our party politics, a party is supported not so much by fighting as by funds. They are called, heaven knows why, in a most extraordinary metaphor, "the sinews of war". They are provided by the sale of peerages to rich men and all sorts of ignominious methods; but there is no questions of such methods here. Many such party supporters, and certainly Mr. Cadbury, were in complete good faith, especially about supporting Peace. But very many of them were Quakers, simply because the Quakers happened to possess a minority of millionaires, a group much smaller but much richer than the Liberal Party as a whole. And the very constitution of modern party politics is such that a government had to placate such supporters, and profess to represent their ideals or prejudices, or whatever we happen to think them. In short, the whole thing was and is a plutocracy; but it was not specially in this case the fault of this group of plutocrats.

That increasing number of intellectuals, who are content to say that Democracy has been a failure, miss the point of the far more disastrous calamity that Plutocracy has been a success. I mean it has been the only sort of success it could be; for Plutocracy has no philosophy or morals or even meaning; it can only be a material success, that is, a base success; Plutocracy can only mean the success of plutocrats in being plutocrats. But this they enjoyed until a short time ago, when an economic judgment shook them like an earthquake. With Democracy the case is exactly the reverse. We may say, with some truth, that Democracy has failed; but we shall only mean that Democracy has failed to exist. It is nonsense to say that the complicated but centralized Capitalist States of the last hundred years have suffered from an extravagant sense of the equality of men or the simplicity of manhood. At most we might say that the civic theory has provided a sort of legal fiction, behind which a rich man could rule a civilization where he could once rule a city; or a usurer throw his net over six nations, where he once threw it over one village. But there is no stronger proof of the fact that it emphatically is plutocracy, and most emphatically is not democracy, that has caused popular institutions to become unpopular, than this example of the pull of the Pacifists upon the Liberal Government just before the Great War. It is only necessary to ask exactly how much such extreme Pacifists counted in the Party Fund, and how much they counted in the Party.

For no electioneering agent, however active and anxious, would have got into an abnormal panic about the *votes* of the Quakers. He would have given them the normal attention that he would give to the votes of the Plymouth Brethren or the Peculiar People, who would very probably have the habit of voting Liberal. But there are not enough individual Quakers to create a landslide of votes at a General Election. By the nature of modern politics, and nobody's fault in particular, the whole point and pivot of the situation was not the large proportion of men who were Quakers, but the large proportion of Quakers who were millionaires. And since this situation is bad at its best, as with Quakers who were sincere in their Pacifism, we can hardly think too badly of so bad a situation at its worst. At its worst it meant that the worst sort of traitors could and did trade with the enemy throughout the War, that the worst sort of profiteers could and did blackmail their own country for bloodsucking profits in the worst hour of her peril, that the worst sort of politicians could play any game they liked with the honor of England and the happiness of Europe, if they were backed and boomed by some vulgar monopolist millionaire; and all these insolent interests nearly brought us to a crash in the supreme crisis of our history; because Parliament had come to mean only a secret government by the rich.

So ended the last considerable attempt to purge Parliament, or the ancient institution of the English. Some years before a similar attempt had been made in France, inspired by the chivalry of Déroulède, who acted much in the military and Christian spirit of Belloc and my brother. That also had failed; and Parliaments continued to prosper; that is, they continued to rot. We have lived to see the last phase; when the revolt against that rot in representative institutions broke out further south, in the very gates of Rome; and it did not fail. But it has brought with it changes not wholly comforting to one who loves liberty and the ancient English conception of a Free Parliament. I am proud to have been among those who tried to save it, even if it was too late.

The Agrarian System of Mexico

HUNTINGTON ADAMS

THE agrarian problem in Mexico is entirely different from anything in our own experience; for in the United States as a whole there has always been not only a sufficiency of good farming land from which to supply the population, but enough to enable us to be the largest exporter of agricultural produce in the world. In Mexico there has always been a deficiency of serviceable agricultural land for the population.

The northern half, which borders on the United States, has a deficient rainfall and semi-desert conditions except where the few rivers flowing from high mountains (where there is some rainfall) can be utilized for irrigation. The southern half of the country, where more than half of the 18,500,000 people of the country live, throughout extensive regions has a rainfall which would be adequate if it were distributed throughout the year. However, with the exception of the mountain slopes facing the Gulf of Mexico, the rain all falls within the space of some five months between May and October; and then it falls in torrential downpours which tend to run off the land. During the rest of the year the land becomes desiccated by drought and pasture lands are almost valueless.

Mexico has an area of 760,294 square miles. This is roughly one-quarter of the area of the United States. It is also approximately equal to the area of the Mountain Division of the United States, which includes the eight states of Montana, Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, New Mexico and Arizona. It is also more similar topographically to the Mountain Division than to any other part of this country, since both are largely included in the valleys of the plateau lying between what we call the Rocky Mountains and the Sierra Nevada.

The area of land classified as tillable in Mexico is 36,000,000 acres (7.4% of the total). The tillable land in our Mountain Division is 30,600,000 acres; but, whereas in 1930 our Mountain Division had a total population of 3,701,000 of whom 2,243,000 were classed as rural, Mexico had a population of 16,552,000 of whom 10,970,000 were rural. So that there were practically four times as many people living off an equal area of tillable land in Mexico as in the most nearly corresponding region of the United States.

The comparison is even more unfavorable than the above figures make it appear for Mexico; for in our Mountain Division are included 8,374,000 acres of land irrigated from public irrigation projects alone, with possibilities of great further expansion, whereas in Mexico there were only 4,150,000 acres of irrigated land with further possibilities far less promising.

This condition in Mexico, of a relatively large population for the extent of tillable land, is not of recent development. Figures as to the number of Indians in Mexico at the time of the Spanish Conquest are necessarily largely guesswork; but all the accounts of the Conquest agree on the relatively dense population in the plateau region about what is now Mexico City. The Franciscan missionary friars claimed that between 1524 and 1540 they had baptized over 6,000,000 Indians in this region (von Humboldt: *Essay on New Spain*, 1802). H. J. Spinden of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, has estimated the Indian blood in Mexico today as equivalent to a pure population of 10,000,000 and concluded "there are fewer Indians today than at the coming of Europeans" (*Geog. Review*, Oct. '28). It seems indicated that even at the time of the discovery of America there was a more dense rural population in what is now Mexico than exists today on an equal area of tillable land in the Mountain Division of the United States.

The agricultural peoples of Mexico of that time were prevented from spreading northward, where they might have found more fertile lands, by the warlike character of the nomadic Indians of what is now the borderland, such as Apaches, Comanches, etc., which the Americans required modern arms and considerable effort to subdue. The Mexicans presumably remained where they could defend the civilization they had developed.

At the time of the Spanish Conquest, in the civilized portions of the Aztec Empire and the other independent kingdoms of the plateau, the basis of land tenure was communal ownership by towns and villages. The tillable land was distributed among the heads of families, and, if continuously cultivated, remained indefinitely in the family and passed by inheritance from one generation to another. In addition to the individual holdings of tillable plots, the village holdings included areas cultivated for the Emperor or King and for district chieftains, as well as common lands, such as forests, etc., for general communal use of the village. Since there were no domestic animals in America until introduced by the Spaniards, except turkeys, ducks and dogs, grazing lands were not required.

In addition to the lands owned by villages of freemen, there had developed a system of large estates owned by the nobility and worked by people attached to the land like serfs. They worked as share-croppers, and paid no taxes or tribute as did the freemen. The restrictions upon their movement (they could leave the estate neither of their own accord nor of that of the owner) suggest that they may have represented prisoners of war, or conquered peoples of alien race.

During the Spanish Colonial régime of nearly 300 years, the lands of the free villages were in general respected, although gradually encroached upon; but the large estates of the Aztec nobles were taken over by the Spaniards and formed the basis for the system of vast estates which continued to grow in size and number throughout the Colonial Period and that of the Republic, down to the time of the Revolution of 1910. Under the Republic, attempts were made to break up the remains of the ancient Aztec system of communal ownership by villages, as unsuited to modern ideas of property, first by Juarez in 1857, and by Porfirio Diaz in 1894 and afterwards. However, the villages which still held such lands failed to take the steps required to defend their interests in the courts, and merely resorted to resistence by force to the appropriation of their lands. So far as the subdivision of such lands went, it aggravated conditions by cases which were unjust in equity, even if in accord with the law, and titles passed to large landowners or to speculative land companies.

By 1910, over 80% of the privately owned land in Mexico (which amounted to 325,000,000 acres) was held in some 13,000 estates of over 2,500 acres each, and 50% of it in some 1,800 estates of over 25,000 acres each. (Mexican statistics are in the metric system. In my figures I have assumed the hectare as 2.5 acres to simplify the resulting numbers. More correctly it should be 2.47 acres). In addition there were some 70,000 farms of 125 to 2,500 acres each (averaging 575 acres) and 770,000 small holdings of less than 125 acres (averaging 5.5 acres). The rural population was 11,775,000, corresponding to about 2,500,000 heads of families. So that over 1,500,000 families of agricultural people were landless, whereas some 2000 proprietors owned a half of the valuable land (and a third of the area of the country).

The Revolution of 1910 did not start specifically because of the demand for agrarian reform; but it was the part of Madero's program which had the greatest effect in winning the support of the country people. It was specifically the basis of the Zapata Rebellion in the state of Morelos in 1911, where all of the sugar mills were burned, and the land appropriated by the people; and soon the popular demand for drastic reform grew so strong throughout the country that no political leader could afford to disregard it.

The first laws to reform the land system were passed in January, 1915. The new Constitution of 1917 provided in Article 27 the legal principles by which large landholdings could be broken up for the public good, and the basic right of settlements or nuclei of population to be provided with sufficient land on which to support themselves. Legislation continued to develop in subsequent years and in 1934 the laws were codified into the Agrarian Code (Codigo Agrario).

The system adopted is not only interesting, but unique in that it is not based on the experience of our civilization derived from Europe, nor upon new theory, as in Russia, but on the system used in the Aztec Empire before the coming of the European.

Any village or legally registered nucleus of 20 families or more, whose members lack land on which to support themselves, may apply for land, or, if they lack sufficient land, may apply for an extension of it. Villages which were deprived formerly of communal lands may apply for restitution of them.

A survey is then made of the possibilities and a special census taken of the inhabitants to determine which are entitled to participate. Special authorities are provided, both for study of each individual case, as well as for handing down of decisions, and in the surveys, both the applicants and the landlords, who might be affected, are represented.

If the petition is found to be justified, the land required is taken from the lands of all large landholdings within a radius of 7 kilometers (4.3 miles) of the village, in proportion to the total areas of those properties, and becomes what is called an "Ejido" (derived from the Latin word "exitus", English equivalent "exit", and used in colonial times). The Ejido is the property of the village. It is inalienable, either in whole or in part, except when condemned by the Government for specific public improvements, such as roads, railways, new centers of population, etc. The tillable portion of the Ejido is divided into plots of approximately equal value, and allocated by lot among the heads of families of the Ejido, who are called "Ejidatarios". Each plot should be of sufficient size to be what a family can cultivate without hiring outside labor (cooperative operation among members of the same Ejido is encouraged).

The Ejidatario is entitled to the use of the plot for life, and upon his death it passes to his designated heir as head of the family. But he cannot hypothecate it, nor rent it, nor transfer it in any form, and may lose his rights to it if it remains uncultivated for two successive years.

The Ejidos also are provided with tracts of grazing lands, and where possible with forests which are for communal use of all members of each Ejido.

To be entitled to become an Ejidatario one must fulfill the following requirements:

(1) Be a Mexican, over 16 years old, if a male, or have a family in her charge if a female.

(2) Have been a resident of the village at least six months before the special census was taken (as a result of the petition), or have been a laborer on a private estate within 10 kilometers (6.2 miles) of the village.

(3) Be a farm worker by occupation.

(4) Own no tillable land as large in extent as the plot he would receive in the Ejido.

(5) Not be the owner of capital goods to exceed 2500 Pesos ($700 U.S. Cy.).

The following provisions protect the landowners who might be affected:

(1) Only land within 7 kilometers (4.3 miles) from the village can be taken for an Ejido.

(2) No buildings nor agricultural structures (such as dams, irrigation ditches, etc.) in a state of usefulness can be taken.

(3) No small farms can be affected; and small farms are specified to be those containing up to 375 acres of irrigated land, or 750 acres of non-irrigated tillable land (in special instances these acres can be reduced to half); nor can land be taken from a large proprietor which would leave him with less than these minimum amounts.

(4) Lands cannot be taken which are planted in bananas, coffee, cacao or fruit trees: lands cannot be taken which are planted in sugar cane, if the proprietor owns a mill of a capacity sufficient to grind all of it: lands cannot be taken which have been planted at least six months previous to the survey with alfalfa, henequen, maguey, etc.

(5) Proprietors whose land is condemned for Ejidos will be paid in 5% bearer bonds to be amortized by drawings over 20 years, at 110% of the declared value of the land for tax purposes.

An interesting feature of the law is the size of the individual lots of tillable land allowed for each Ejidatario. Since one of the purposes of the Agrarian Policy is to put an end to peonage (that is to say, the landless class of farm laborers), it would not do to provide individual lots larger than the area which one family could cultivate successfully without hiring outside labor. After twenty years of practical experience in the matter, the Agrarian Code of 1934 provides for lots of 10 acres of irrigable land, or 20 acres of land dependent upon rainfall. The executive may increase these amounts only out of the national lands (i.e. not from those of private proprietors). In any case, since the total tillable land in Mexico is estimated at 36,000,000 acres and a study in 1927 of those who might be entitled to participate in Ejidos throughout the country showed a total of 1,686,000, this would give an average of only 21.4 acres each as the maximum possible, if all the land were taken from the proprietors and made into Ejidos.

In addition to the Ejido system, the laws provide for colonization projects for new centers of population as small landowners, in such a form as to encourage the large landholders to organize them for their own account and thus avoid condemnation of their land for Ejidos.

A national Land Bank was established in 1926, banks specially for granting credits to Ejidos in nine of the states, and a system of Agricultural Credit Societies, subsidiary to the Land Bank, throughout the country. Loans are made for equipment, and on crops unmarketed, and assistance rendered for cooperative marketing. Elementary instruction in scientific methods of agriculture is given in all of the rural schools, of which there were 11,349 in 1927, and eight state agricultural colleges have been established for higher education. In 1929, the latter had 9,400 acres under cultivation.

Up to July, 1920, 243 villages had received Ejidos: during the following year 225 more villages were provided for: by June, 1930, 3,609 Ejidos had been established; and up to April 10, 1935, a total of 7,041. The total number of Ejidatarios was 895,284, corresponding to 487,165 families and to a population of over 2,000,000. The total area in Ejidos was 29,500,000 acres, of which 9,340,000 are classed as tillable and 4,840,000 acres were cultivated and harvested the previous year.

The average number of members of an Ejido was 127, corresponding to some 320 people (69 families): the average size of an Ejido was 4,180 acres, of which 1,325 acres were classed as tillable. This corresponds to an average of 10.5 acres of tillable land per Ejidatario: of these the averages were 5.4 acres cultivated the year previous, 1.8 acres in fallow, and 3.2 acres not utilized. These averages, however, are unduly weighted by the sections of tropical character where clearance of land is laborious. In the region of the central plateau, which alone accounts for more than half of the total Ejidatarios, the averages per Ejidatario were 6.3 acres of tillable land, 4.8 acres of cultivated, 1.1 acres in fallow, and 0.35 acre not utilized. So that in that portion of the country 95% of the tillable land of the Ejidos was in use. (Most farming in Mexico has to be "dry farming" with fallow, and because of the long dry season such rotation of crops as is used in our corn and wheat belt is not practical.)

By 1935, the Ejidos contained 25.7% of all the tillable land in the country, but of the total useful land, including grazing and forest lands, only 10.6%.

In 1930, by which time the Ejidos had acquired only 13.4% of the tillable land, they produced 17.5% of the corn (i.e., 348,072 metric tons, or 13,700,000 bushels), 9.3% of the wheat (25,638 tons), and 16% of the rice (23,291 tons). The 18 principal crops of Mexico were valued at $192,000,000 U. S. Cy., and of that the Ejidos produced $20,900,000 U. S. Cy., or 11%. The fact that they produced 11% of the value off of 13.4% of the tillable land, of course, does not indicate inferior results of labor, but merely that in general the Ejidatarios devoted themselves to crops for sustenance, rather than to crops of higher yield value per acre, which in turn require more capital, such as cotton, coffee and sugar cane. (The Ejidos produced 2.9% of the cotton, 7.2% of the coffee and 8.7% of the sugar cane.)

Up to 1930, in addition to the 3,609 new Ejidos formed, there had been 137 Ejidos formed by restitution (ancient communal lands which the courts had decided had been illegally appropriated by others) and 37 enlargements of Ejidos. Petitions had been denied (as unwarranted) in the cases of 443 new Ejidos (11% of those applied for), 695 cases of restitution (83% of those applied for) and 38 for enlargement (51% of those applied for). These figures indicate that the courts have protected the landowers against presumed injustices in a large number of cases.

By 1930 the large landowners affected by condemnation had lost 19% of their tillable land and 13.4% of their total land. These figures, however, vary greatly from state to state (tillable land lost, 65.5% in Hidalgo, 65.7% in Durango, 7.5% in Chihuahua, and 2.5% in Tamaulipas) according to the number of villages which lacked land, and the land available in large estates.

For payment of the land condemned the Government has issued and delivered bonds. However, neither has the interest been paid nor the bonds been redeemed. It is claimed that since the execution of the land policy came at a time when the country was emerging from a long period of revolutionary disturbance, which had prostrated its finances, it was faced with the alternatives either of so postponing the desired reform as to make it ineffective, or to proceed as it did, leaving the matter of settlement of the bonds for the future. Nothing in the law indicates that the lands should be given to the Ejidos free of charge, and it is implied that they should be paid for, since it provides that the money received by the Government for the lands should be paid to the landowners whose land was condemned. However, to have attempted to burden the Ejidos with debt for the land might have interfered with the rapid execution of the reform. In any case it was not done. In 1927 the Agrarian Debt resulting from the condemnations amounted to $153,000,000 U. S. Cy., and by 1935 it was probably in the nature of $325,000,000 U. S. Cy.

Whatever one may think of the theory or ethics of the Mexican agrarian policy, it is evident that already it has been carried out to such an extent that it must remain an important feature of the country's social structure for a long time to come. It has been effective in putting into possession of the land they work over 2,000,000 country people who were formerly landless. The standard of living possible is less than what the average American would consider satisfactory. However in any country the average standard of living of the farmer cannot exceed what he with the help of his unpaid family can produce without hiring labor; for if the hiring of labor allows the farm proprietor to improve his standard, then the hired farm labor must accept a standard sufficiently lower to keep the average the same. The average cannot be more than the value of the average crops produced per worker. The average can be raised by improvements in method, or by reducing the extent of marginal land farmed, but n the latter case the production is reduced and the number of people who can make a living by farming.

Taking the literal meaning of the word, the Mexcan agrarian policy might be termed communism, since the land is owned communally by the Ejidos. But its effect socially would seem to be the opposite of what the word has come to imply, since the development of the Soviet system. For the Ejidatario havng become the owner of a share in an Ejido has become the equivalent of a capitalist who owns a share n a trust, which he cannot dispose of, but the income from which he can use as he desires. The Ejidatario can be counted upon to be against revolutionary disorders which tend to the destruction of property and the lowering of values. Probably he will be against regimentation of individual activities, and against domination by the proletariat of industrial workers.

For rapid economic development of the possibilities of agriculture the Soviet form of regimentation of farmers probably is more effective than the Mexican method, but for the ultimate contentment of the country people, there is much to be said for the Mexican system. Already, it has gone a long way towards solving the problem of the landless tenant and share-cropper in Mexico, which problem in the United States has not yet been effectively approached.

Gentlemen Wanted

HOFFMAN NICKERSON

THAT the above title should suggest an advertisement for chorus men or ribbon clerks is typical of our time. Instead, our purpose is to see what the word gentlemen once meant, to consider how the gentry as a separate class have been practically exterminated, and to note how their disappearance has aggravated the troubles of the modern world. Indeed that disappearance may have done more than aggravate those troubles; it may have caused them. The reader shall judge.

Among the dictionary meanings for gentleman we find: "A man well born; one of good family though not noble; one entitled to bear a coat of arms." Clearly this meaning is too narrow; most nobles would be astonished to be told they were not gentlemen, and even kings have been proud of the title. The next definition is ". . . anyone above the social condition of a yeoman", that is above the most respectable class of commoners. Further on we read: "A man of gentle or refined manners . . ., raised above the vulgar by education, habits, and social esteem"; also "a respectable man who engages in no occupation or profession regularly for gain". Significantly enough we also find the word debased by popularization as "a man or men irrespective of condition; used especially in addressing men in popular assemblies". At the other end of the scale, among terms in which the word is a part, we find that of "gentleman-at-arms".

Now we are getting warmer, as the children say. If we rule out certain alien folk like the Chinese and concentrate upon the history of our own ancestors we regularly find gentility connected with soldiership. This connection is not limited to our own ancestors, we also find it among the Japanese with their Samurai, but among our ancestors it was universal. Although all soldiers were not gentlemen yet all gentlemen – with certain clearly defined exceptions – were supposed to be soldiers. A gentleman might be a priest, our ancestors had the sense to see that the priestly task of preserving the moral and spiritual order was as important as that of preserving the physical order by fighting. Once ordained, people were not supposed to fight; according to a familiar maxim, "the Church abhors bloodshed". Even so, the prohibition was not always observed; some churchmen, including William the Conqueror's brother Bishop Odo of Bayeux, salved their consciences by fighting with great clubs which bruised and smashed but did not cut. Others fought with swords as lustily as any layman; in seventeenth-century France, Louis XIII made the future Cardinal de Retz Coadjutor of Paris for bravery and conspicuous courtesy in an informal duel with rapiers. Another unusual non-military kind of gentleman was the gentleman-lawyer whose long gown earned him the qualification of *noblesse de robe*. Exceptions notwithstanding, the typical gentleman was a fighting man.

Historically the idea of the fighting gentleman goes back to the great rally of Christendom in the Dark

Ages. In the ancient pagan city-states the obligation to bear arms rested almost equally upon all free citizens. In Greece and Republican Rome the aristocratic cavalry arm was inferior in fighting power to the middle-class heavy infantry. Under the Roman Empire, although the army was the central institution of the state, although the Emperor's title was *Imperator* which began by meaning merely commander-in-chief, and although generalship was synonymous with social distinction, nevertheless long centuries went by during which everyone except a tiny minority of professional soldiers was systematically disarmed. The so-called "fall" of the Roman Empire in the fifth century changed this situation very little. Local government in the West was taken over, on the whole quite peaceably, by the hereditary commanders of Auxiliary units in the Roman Army – Vandals, Franks, Goths, etc. – but the institutions of the fatigued Roman civilization were left unchanged. Especially the mass of men remained disarmed, and the wealthy land-owning class characteristic of the high Imperial time continued to exist.

The crisis came in the eighth and ninth centuries when the ferocious Saracens, the heathen Hungarian horsemen, and the heathen Viking pirates from Scandinavia brought Christendom to its lowest ebb. Inasmuch as local defense had become the chief duty of our European ancestors, the rich landed men turned soldiers.

Of course neither the combative instinct nor the occasional necessity for fighting could be confined in the aristocracy. None the less the upper class, afterwards known in England as the gentry, were expected to take the lead in all military work and to do the greater part of that work themselves.

Since highly mobile raiders were more to be feared than regular invasions, the fighting gentleman was habitually mounted. Our word chivalry was originally *chevalerie*, conduct worthy of a mounted man. The mediaeval aristocrats were also armored. Seldom opposed by organized and disciplined infantry, against other enemies they were almost as formidable as the tank of today. But the important thing about them was that they were bound by a fixed code of honor, limited, if you like, but rigid. Whatever their individual temperaments, as a class they had courage drilled into them from boyhood. If you accused an old-fashioned gentleman of certain things, or even said certain other things in his presence, he would not argue but fight. St. Louis of France, who preferred to have men think of him as a *prud'homme*, that is a loyal gentleman, rather than as King of France, used to say three accusations could not be passed over; a man must fight if accused of cowardice, sodomy, or treason.

On the whole this cult of courage was successful. We find plenty of stories like that of the military début of young Boutières, a youngster of sixteen or seventeen who joined Bayard's company for one of the early sixteenth-century Italian campaigns. In his first fight the boy captured a Venetian standard-bearer with his standard. The prisoner, teased by Bayard for surrendering to so young a soldier, excused himself by claiming to have surrendered not to Boutières but to the company as a whole.

Bayard's biographer writes:

The Chevalier [Bayard] looked at Boutières. "Do you hear what your prisoner says? You are not the man to capture him."

The boy flew up and answered in a rage, "Monseigneur, I beg you to grant what I ask."

"Surely," said the other, "what is it?"

"Only this: I will give my prisoner his horse and his arms, and will take my own. We'll return to the same place, and if I beat him again, I swear to God he shall die; but if he escapes, I'll quit him of his ransom."

Never was the good Chevalier more pleased with anything, and spoke out at once, "Surely I grant it."

But nothing happened, because the Venetian would not accept the offer — much to his discredit, and, on the other hand, much to the credit of young Boutières.

And my lord de la Palice (the Commander-in-Chief) said that he had known of old the breed of Boutières, and from that house came only gallant gentlemen.

While waiting for the next of the irrational mass massacres characteristic of our democratic and progressive era ever since the French Revolution, a prevailing mood of our time is one of hatred and contempt for heroic endurance under arms. Among other absurdities people have tried to call fighting unchristian. We need not here consider the isolated texts by which Quakers and modernist preachers seek to defend this nonsense. But it is important to note that the early Christian centuries knew practically nothing of it. Two or three anarchically minded theologians of doubtful orthodoxy can be quoted in its favor and that is all. The early legend of Christian pacifism reposes on evidence almost as slender as that other legend of early Christian communism. The Middle Ages had no doubts on the subject. At certain times and places the local clergy might condemn duelling or seek to discourage tournaments because of the danger to life. But if you had told anyone in mediaeval Christendom that the fighting gentleman was an unchristian type you would not have been understood. Had you said this to an educated man he would doubtless have quoted from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans that those who govern "bear not the sword in vain for the punishment of evil doers" – without which punishment society could not exist.

The stories of King Arthur, of Roland, and all the long wars against the infidel are there to prove the point, but one cannot illustrate it better than by another anecdote of St. Louis. The saintly King was about as studious in inquiring into the duties of a Christian man and as zealous in doing those duties as it is humanly possible to be. He was the friend of St. Thomas Aquinas, so much so that he had a large scallop or semi-circular piece cut out of the edge of his dining-room table, so that St. Thomas, who was of enormous girth, might reach his food the more easily. Either saint would have been equally shocked at our colossal modern wars or at our hundred-per-cent pacifists. According to Joinville, St. Louis once told the following story: It seems there was a monastery dedicated to Our Lady in which a theological debate was once held between three scholarly monks and three Jewish rabbis. And in this monastery there was a poor and aged knight, crippled in the wars and going about on crutches, a pensioner of the monks. He listened to the debate and when it was over asked permission to put a question to the principal Jew. This being grated, he asked the Israelite whether he believed that Our Lady had been the mother of Our Lord while yet a virgin. When the Jew replied that he believed nothing of the kind, the old knight said "In that case you have committed a great imprudence, for this monastery is dedicated to Our Lady. You have come into her house and you impugn her honor." So saying he raised his crutch, knocked the Jew flat on the pavement, and over his temporarily prostrate body made a little speech to the company, saying that if a Christian man heard the Faith mis-said he ought not to discuss the matter unless he were very learned, but if he had a sword in his hand he ought to thrust it into the mis-sayer as far as the sword would go.

Besides courage, the old-fashioned gentleman was trained in courtesy. Indeed this was a necessary result of his preoccupation with arms, for no one is habitually rude to another armed man of equal rank with himself – it is not safe. Nor can one successfully command an armed group, whether of equals or inferiors, without being a decent fellow according to their standards. The commanded must fear the commander and find him able and ready to punish at need, but they must also respect him and must not hate him, otherwise he will die by treachery when next in danger. In our own day plenty of detested officers have been shot in the back by their own people as soon as the latter got a chance at them in action. Now to be thought a decent fellow and at the same time to enjoy social distinction in any community means the observance of some code of good manners. Toward those far weaker than himself, an armed master is not directly compelled to such high standards. Human nature being what it is, all power must sometimes be used for bullying and cruelty. But not only to the armed men who are his instruments, but also to the community as a whole, a master who is a wholesale bully weakens his own position. Nor must he be cruel except to those generally agreed to deserve harsh treatment. Above all things, as Machiavelli repeats so often, a Prince must not be hated by his people. In historical fact the old-fashioned gentleman prided himself on kindness and courtesy, especially toward women and the weak. If his courtesy toward women was not supineness and a readiness to be bullied by them, as in the case of so many twentieth-century American males, it was none the less real.

Naturally the mediaeval aristocrat did not spend all his time either in fighting or in practising with arms. As Lord of the Manor he was responsible for local government and for justice, he had to hear complaints and settle disputed cases. Kipling makes a dying Baron advise his son:

Never mind if you want to go hunting;
Hear them out if it takes you all day.

Besides police work and justice, a Lord had other more or less official functions: he was expected to support and endow religion, also to help in times of scarcity. Nor could he make money out of his tenants and serfs by charging them in rents and dues "all that the traffic would bear" as in our economically competitive society. In legal theory his serfs and certain classes of tenants were at his mercy and he could tax them as he pleased. But nowadays we all know how far legal theory is from practice, and in mediaeval practice rents and servile dues were rigidly fixed by custom. Only an exceptional wicked Lord would think of opposing what was then the enormous moral force of such custom; if anyone did so he was acting against the grain of society. One of the many healthy things about the Middle Ages was that they intensely disliked unusual or heavy taxation, and the dues and rates paid to a Feudal Lord were more like light taxes than our competitive rents.

Besides being a fighter and governor, the mediaeval aristocrat was also a sportsman. As the Kipling lines just quoted have reminded us, his favorite sport was hunting. Now hunting is not altogether unlike campaigning. When you are mounted, still more when chasing powerful beasts, there is always danger. You are always exposed to the weather. Besides hardening the body and accustoming one to danger, hunting has the further military value that it teaches a man to judge country. He gets to know his own neighborhood well, which is all to his good as a commander, and from that he gets the faculty of quickly sizing up new localities.

The old-fashioned gentleman must not show himself too fond of money. Moralists might distinguish between a proper and an improper concern for wealth but general opinion considered avarice baser than prodigality. It was an axiom that the good knight never kept treasure for himself. All gentlemen were supposed to be generous. All Great Men were also supposed to be "magnificent", by which our ancestors meant that on great occasions such as the building of a church or the giving of a wedding feast the Great

Man was expected "to do things handsomely". The strictest churchmen, even when they were themselves friars pledged to poverty, taught this duty of "magnificence". Men being what they are, it is easy to find historical instances in which this insistence upon liberality in the gentleman's code – like any article of any ideal code – was broken by individuals whom it was supposed to bind. Plenty of avaricious kings and nobles could be cited. Nevertheless the code had real force; miserly money-grubbing was always despised in such men. Nor is this unsupported by present-day observation: the old-fashioned gentleman, remember, was first of all a fighting man, and today, as always, men whose trade it is to risk their skins are seldom money-lovers.

Scholarship the old-fashioned gentleman might or might not have. In the early Middle Ages he often did not have it, although even then the custom of hearing important matters debated between learned men made for clever thought, and not a few highly educated gentlemen can be found in those early centuries. Later gentility and learning began to walk hand in hand; when you wanted to praise an Elizabethan gentleman you called him "a scholar and a soldier". Still the two were never identical; unlike China our ancestors never had a Mandarin class to which people were admitted by passing examinations. In the Western World even at the height of the Renaissance a gentleman might be very little of a scholar and no scholar was necessarily a gentleman.

For centuries gentility has declined until today, as we have seen, the words "gentlemen wanted" suggest an advertisement for ribbon clerks or chorus men. In outline the process is simple: as a class the gentleman has been almost exerminated by the business man.

In detail however the long decline of the gentleman has been a complex affair, full of eddies and cross-currents. Gentility had such prestige, was so attractive to the instincts of our race that it died hard.

As the Dark Ages – whose fearful need for local defense had first produced the fighting gentleman – gave way to the true Middle Ages the function of the military aristocracy somewhat changed. Except along the borders of Christendom the Heathen was no longer a peril, and almost everywhere those borders steadily advanced as our ancestors alternately converted the aforesaid Heathen or victoriously hammered him. Within the increasing area more or less forcibly Christianized, manners softened as population and wealth increased. From a deadly peril, as in the Dark Ages, banditry became merely an infernal nuisance, and those who took the lead in abating this nuisance were no longer the local Lords but the Kings.

The mediaeval King was emphatically a gentleman. At his best, as in Saint Louis of France, Edward I of England, or Rudolph of Hapsburg, he was as fine a gentleman as ever lived. But he was exceptional in that he stood for central government and public order over a larger area than any local Lord. Offenses against the public peace were the work of men who "had neither the fear of God before their eyes, nor regarded the King, his Crown and dignity".

At the same time the Kings were allied to the middle-class manufacturers and traders, the business men of the day. Both were opposed to the power of the great nobles, for these last thought of the King not as their master but only as first among his equals, and were apt to be more jealous than the King toward the beginnings of manufacturing and mercantile wealth. Moreover the King from his central position stood to gain more than any local Lord, however great, by encouraging manufacture and commerce which could be taxed. The affair was connected with the increased importance of towns; the word bourgeois, meaning today a man of the middle class and sometimes recently anyone not proletarian, meant originally a burgher, that is a full citizen of a town, as distinguished from the peasant and from the gentleman who derived his income from land. Interestingly enough, the middle-class townsmen who were later to create a proletariat less secure and more dissatisfied than the peasant did not at first do so. Mediaeval manufacture was regulated by the guild system under which the average apprentice could look forward to becoming a Master working for himself. Townsmen and merchants, although their civic militias could and did fight stoutly on occasions, were not primarily men of the sword like the gentleman; they preferred the mass production of public order at the hands of the King. As manufacturing was organized in small units under the guilds, so the profits of commerce were kept moderate by the Just Price. With the whole weight of community opinion behind her, the Church insisted that greed for gain was sinful. According to her, men should work to support themselves and their families decently in their station; the gentry were entitled to their incomes because of the arduous public work they did, but for a merchant to enrich himself by buying cheap and selling dear was abominable. In flagrant cases the authority of the State would step in and re-enforce the Church by dealing harshly with profiteers. Of all traders, the trader in money, the money-changer or banker, was the most suspected. To charge interest on an economically unproductive loan, such as one for building a church or making war, or to make the interest on a productive loan so high that you denied a fair profit to the borrower, was to commit the sin of usury. Of all men the usurer was most watched, feared, and hated. Accordingly the Middle Ages had few proletarians or business millionaires. The business man, the humble vassal of the King, long remained socially inferior to the gentleman.

An abrupt break in the curve came with the first of the modern centuries, the sixteenth. One might debate indefinitely whether the sickness of mediaeval society, the sloth and corruption of the higher Clergy, the cruelty and queer, twisted piety of so many powerful laymen, must necessarily have been fatal. The growing absolutism of the Popes had set an evil example to secular Princes. Machiavelli, rationalizing the lust for absolute power, antedates Luther and Calvin, Cortez and Pizarro. Next it so happened that the two bodies which had kept the business man in his place were both heavily attacked at once: the Church by religious revolt, the gentry by the economic hurricane let loose by the great voyages of discovery. Within a single long lifetime the coasts of most of the known world were discovered.

Within a second long lifetime the purchasing power of gold and silver had been cut in half. In a society whose economic and social arrangements depended on immemorial custom, the shock was tremendous. Meanwhile nearly half of Europe had broken with the Papacy and seized the enormous endowments of religion. Calvin justified usury as no Christian theologian before him had ever done. In England civil wars and revolutions destroyed most of the old families, replacing them by a gang of adventurers with whom the remnant of well-born men allied themselves to loot the monasteries, and in the end to set up an aristocratic government under a fiction of Kingship. The victory of Cromwell's highly-paid Ironsides over the cavaliers who followed Charles I was symbolic. After that victory no more was heard of the old economic morality and the laws which had protected small property. Thenceforward private wealth ruled England. In France matters took a different course. There the monarchy in alliance with the people mastered the nobles and the Protestant allies. Outwardly the social structure remained as before, but the strength of the gentry was undermined by a new centralization of government under the Bourbons. Local liberties withered as the King became the head of an impersonal state machine, a bureaucracy whose officials increasingly regulated everything. Ambitious gentlemen became courtiers; those who remained on their estates were despised as boors. While the gentlemen of England were subtly coarsened by their new alliance with the growing power of commerce and usurious finance, those of France became decorative but brittle excrescences on the social order. In Prussia the aristocracy retained their vigor and – to the great military advantage of that kingdom – have ever since been used to officer the army. Frederick the Great, when asked why he always used country gentlemen as officers, replied: "They have their faults but they neither lie nor steal."

The next stage was the French Revolution and its aftermath. For a moment it seemed that the Napoleonic soldiers, with those bonny fighters the Marshals at their head, might sire a new, magnificently virile nobility of the sword. But from top to bottom the vast Revolutionary-Napoleonic scheme was full of weaknesses to be cured, if at all, only with time – which was not granted. In the event, the falling Emperor was betrayed by Marshal after Marshal, as shameless in their treachery as the English nobles of James II. Wellington dryly remarked that he had never understood how seemingly honorable men could have been so false to James until he had himself seen Bonaparte similarly betrayed.

The nineteenth century saw the increase of democracy and so-called liberalism. That curious time especially prided itself on its "liberation" from restraints upon the acquisitive appetite. In France the Revolution had destroyed the old economic morality as thoroughly as Cromwell had destroyed it in England. Face to face with the new power of finance and without a legitimate King, the French gentry retired into an obscure isolation. In the United States, now beginning to count, a temporary revival of gentility was seen: both New York State and the South developed true aristocracies. But the New

York Patroons, long weakened, went under in the tenants' war of 1848, while the Southern gentlemen, their championship of local liberties unhappily intertwined with slavery, were crushed at Appomattox. The British gentry clung longer to power; until nearly the end of the century only gentlemen were elected to the House of Commons. But throughout Victoria's reign the increasing wealth and influence of the middle-class business world threw a dark puritanical shadow over manners. Toward the end of the century political life began to change: a queer gang of cosmopolitan adventurers of mixed blood were able to get the nation into the Boer War, and increasing numbers of men who were not gentlemen began to appear in Parliament.

An important symptom of the nineteenth-century decline of gentility was the abandonment or taming down of the duel. The old-fashioned gentleman had prided himself on never refusing a challenge from an equal; as we have seen, his willingness to fight was the first article of his class code. In the English-speaking countries the duel was now abandoned. The last formal combat between New Yorkers was that between Hamilton and Burr in 1804. In the Southern States duelling flourished enormously; indeed the practice was abused for want of Courts of Honor to decide whether a challenged party was morally bound to fight his challenger. As late as the 1870's we find the Code defended, and with some force, in a book published in Charleston, South Carolina. Nevertheless the duel gradually disappeared during the second half of the century. In England also it dwindled and and almost died out. On the continent of Europe and in Latin America, although dueling has persisted, it has been tamed out of all resemblance to its old self. For a long time duels between Frenchmen have seldom been fatal, except when fought in North Africa between officers armed with that murderous weapon the sabre. In France itself the customary weapon is a light rapier, the fencing is cautious, and the fight is usually stopped when a few drops of blood have been drawn from a slight wound.

During the war of 1914-1918 gentility sank lower than ever before. The gentlemen of Russia were murdered or exiled. The German aristocrats lost their power. In England the immemorial tradition tradition that Prime Ministers must be gentlemen was broken by the premiership of Lloyd George.

Meanwhile the middle class, having destroyed the power of the gentry, is not at ease in Zion. On the contrary it everywhere finds itself attacked by leaders claiming to speak for the proletariat – the millions of propertyless men of whom democracy has made theoretically free citizens, while the business man's tolerance of usury and disregard of the Just Price has helped to make them into mere wage-earners. I say "has helped to make", for the flabby irresponsibility of the masses must be taken into account, as is proved by the existence of countries, among them France, Denmark, and Ireland, which have remained wise and vigorous enough to preserve small property without the enforcement of economic morality by law. The so-called proletarian movements are largely middle-class in leadership. Nor are they altogether calculated to benefit the wage earners, for in practice socialism must become communism, which is a sort of slavery.

Political proletarianism is important chiefly as evidence of acute dissatisfaction with the social order ruled by the business man.

Besides proletarianism, the modern world is disturbed by a general contempt for human experience as expressed in tradition. In art and literature the latest fashions favor the ugly and the unintelligible. The fatigued intellects of modern philosophers deny the power of the human mind to grasp any important and definite truth. The latest educational theories insist that children should be taught nothing except that which they themselves desire to learn. Even the clear axioms of geometry are clouded by mystagogues in the name of "relativity". To what extent, if at all, the triumphant business man has helped to set this whole whirligig of nonsense spinning we need not here debate; at any rate he has dismally failed to replace whirligig with orderly, human progress. He has proved himself not a producer but a consumer of public order.

The reasons for the business man's failure seem simple, almost obvious. It is of the nature of man to act under leadership. To be effective, leaders must be either feared or loved, preferably both. As a type the business man is neither. Suppose, reader, you were one of a crowd to whom came a man saying: "I propose to enrich myself by your labor. One or two of you I will somewhat enrich. The livelihood of the rest I will make less secure than before." In substance that is what the business man has said to the proletarians of the world.

Back to the gentleman! We need leaders who can make themselves feared and loved, and he was both.

Courage, statesmanship, sportsmanship, and liberality were his code, and every article of it would be as popular as ever.

Where then can we find material for a new aristocracy? In Europe at least there are certain hopeful signs. The confusion of our age is not entirely unlike that of the Dark Ages in which the fighting gentleman appeared; if physical security and public order have not yet ebbed to the ninth-century level, nevertheless our modern intellectual disorder already breaks all records. A fish decays first in the head, as Maurras says, and our intellectual decay brings with it a mounting curve of massacre from wars, revolutions, and violent crime. For disorder there is but one first-aid treatment, the harsh remedy of arms. Warned by the Russian example, the intelligence and virility of Italy produced Fascism, which beat down the local Reds in a long series of street fights. More or less imperfectly, the Fascist example has been widely imitated outside of Italy.

The Fascist a gentleman? He is a thug and a bully, say the outraged Reds. Probably the ninth-century heathen raiders called the fighting gentleman of that day hard names.

No wretch e'er felt the halter draw
With good opinion of the law.

Men being what they are, the Fascist is not perfect. But at least he has applied his violence to the enemies of society. At least he has set up states ruled neither by business men nor revolutionaries. That he has not recruited his numbers exclusively from the upper classes is both true and salutary; in the early mediaeval records one finds frequent reference to low-born men ennobled for valor on the field of battle. Should the Red tide rise higher then there will be but two questions asked of Fascist recruits: Can you, in one way or another, fight well? And will you fight not to destroy but to preserve? In a restored social order Fascism may beget a new aristocracy of gentlemen-at-arms.

T. S. Eliot and Irving Babbitt

G. R. Elliott

A proper task for a young scholar proceeding towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Harvard University would be a dissertation upon "The Influence of Irving Babbitt on Thomas Stearns Eliot". Eliot was a student of Babbitt's at Harvard, and in conversation (so I am informed) has been heard to refer to him as "master", acknowledging a strong indebtedness. In *After Strange Gods*, published in 1934, where he places Babbitt among the modern "heretics" whom he deprecates, he nevertheless speaks of him as "one for whose memory I have the highest respect and admiration". But presently he remarks, rather nonplussingly, that Babbitt's name "instantly suggests that of Ezra Pound, his peer in cosmopolitanism". The word "peer" is dubious in this context. Babbitt's cosmopolitanism differs from Mr. Pound's in quality, I think – that is, in nature and in value – if not in quantity. The question of quantity would require an extensive investigation; which I must leave to the scholar proposed above. It would provide an illuminating appendix to his discussion of Babbitt's effect on Eliot.

But that effect – here I must warn the ambitious doctoral candidate – is mainly the kind that scholars term "indirect influence". It appears less when Eliot is speaking (in print, at least) directly of Babbitt than when he is dealing with other topics. For instance, in the volume named above, when considering Thomas

Hardy, in whose outlook he rightly finds a real moral baseness, Eliot says: "If somewhat deficient in vitality, people imagine passion to be the surest sign of vitality. This in itself may go towards accounting for Hardy's popularity." Such a passage is in close accord with Babbitt's critical thought; and so is the following perception: "It is in moments of moral and spiritual struggle depending on spiritual sanctions, rather than in those bewildering minutes in which we are all very much alike, that men and women are nearest to being real." Of course I do not mean to detract from the originality, in the best sense of this word, of Eliot's ethical insight. Moreover that insight, since his conversion to Christianity, has no doubt been nourished by the explicitly Christian writers rather than by Babbitt. But in his formative years Eliot must have been affected by his Harvard master in a crucial manner, a manner that prepared him later on to enter the Christian Church with a strong moral as well as emotional conviction.

That fact seems to me written throughout Eliot's work in invisible ink. Perhaps it could be rendered visible as day by the acid of investigative literary science. May the young scholar to whom I am recommending that task bring a very sharp insight to bear on the text of Eliot's writings. Incidentally he might also interview Mr. Eliot in the flesh. Time was when the field of the Ph.D. dissertation was restricted to dead authors. But that rule has now been happily relaxed, even at Harvard, I believe; and Mr. Eliot is still, happily, very much alive. In spite of his known reserve he might be induced by a fresh and eager inquisitor from his Alma Mater to give valuable oral evidence in this case. It is an important case. It illustrates significantly the underground and seeping fashion of much of Babbitt's influence.

It has been pointed out that William Wordsworth had an abiding effect upon many subsequent writers who ostensibly broke with him. Babbitt's fate is similar. Antipodal as he was to Wordsworth he resembled him in rock-like individuality, in strong sense of mission, and iterative tenacity of manner. Babbitt was not one of those teachers who, knowing how very much may be said on every side of a question, are primarily anxious to give full play to the budding minds of their students. He bent them forcibly towards his light. So that later on, in the process of finding their own form, they were apt by way of reaction to lean away from him extremely; that is, if they had a marked temperamental bent of their own. But if they had also a sufficient moral depth of soil, Babbitt's influence persisted in their roots and fibers; even while their posture, their formal position, was averted from his clamant kind of humanism.

Hence the remarkable vagary that appeared in the second phase (alas, the third and maturest phase, which many of us awaited, was prevented by death) of the critical writings of Stuart Sherman, one of Babbitt's most gifted pupils. And it seemed to me that the same consideration helped, at least, to account for the extreme position taken by T. S. Eliot in his article in *The Forum*, July, 1928, on "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt". I believed that after a while Mr. Eliot would wish to revise that essay in the direction of fairness and adequacy. But he has republished it twice without, I think, any essential alteration. It is included in his current volume, *Essays Ancient and Modern;* where, moreover, he refrains from reprinting two other early papers "with which" (he explains in the preface) "I was dissatisfied". Clearly, then, he is not yet dissatisfied by his dissatisfaction with Babbitt's humanism.

Eliot's truest instinct in this essay is that religion at its best surpasses humanism always – as Babbitt always admits. However, there are many different grades of religion and of humanism. Suppose we let grade M represent the common or barnyard variety of each. (I seem to be under the influence of the logical style of the doctoral dissertation, with which my thoughts were concerned above.) Grade M religion is flat institutionalism; grade M humanism is flat common sense. Precise statistics are not available but I should estimate that those two powers have been about equal, and equally necessary, in the story of human civilization. Common sense must ever take the temple with a grain of salt; whereas on the other hand the salt loseth its savor, in the end, without the temple. Institutional religion has a tendency to senselessness, but is properly, nevertheless, the chief base and organ of the common sense – which has to keep working to make good sense of institutional religion. Remembering all that we owe to good human common sense, we must declare that there is certainly such a thing as a humanistic habit: it is the state of mind of many persons in many places at many times.

When Eliot declares that "there is no humanistic habit: humanism is, I think, merely the state of mind of a few persons in a few places at a few times" – he is thinking of grade A humanism or, let's say, grades

A, B, and C. And over against these exceptional outcroppings of humanity, he sets the total bulk of religion, grades A to Z. This is to compare a quality with a quantity. This is to weigh a handful of humanistic game-cocks against a whole barnyard of religious mixed fowl. Naturally the game-cocks kick the beam. As for grade A religion, it too is certainly not a "habit": it appears in just "a few persons in a few places at a few times".

In this matter, as in the matter of Babbitt's and Pound's cosmopolitanisms, we have to distinguish quality and quantity. In addition we have to distinguish the few and the many. Eliot is entirely right, I am sure, in urging that not only the many but also the few as part of the many have permanent need of the temple. (His word for it is "religion", but "temple" or "church" seems to me a less ambiguous term for that which he mainly means.) He is right in claiming that, without this, society cannot have "a spiritual coordination", and that in this regard Babbitt's humanism is inadequate. But the following assertion, while purporting to speak for all, for both the few and the many, speaks for the many only: "It is not clear that Mr. Babbitt has any other enthusiasm to offer except the enthusiasm for being lifted out of one's merely rational self – by some enthusiasm." (That suggestive dash, which does not now appear in the essay, has been retained by me, with scholiastic zeal, from the first edition.)

The many, certainly, do not have the steady enthusiasm of justice, the divine power of justice beyond "one's merely rational self", that runs through the writings of Irving Babbitt. The many cannot have his devotion to those sublime ideas or "natures" of truth, fortitude, and righteousness which, as Emerson said, "no man ever gets above". Indeed the very word "enthusiasm" in its old high meaning, which Babbitt did so much to revive, is a repellent enigma to the modern romantic mob, which (to apply here Eliot's words regarding Babbitt) has no other enthusiasm except the enthusiasm for being lifted – by some enthusiasm. But Babbitt's kind of enthusiasm, so foreign to the many, can be shared by the few, of all races and creeds; who, whatever their other addictions, can agree in that devotion and help to leaven society with it.

Puzzling upon the intent of Babbitt's central doctrine, Eliot puts the question, "What is the higher will to *will*?" . . . and presently decides that the answer is "civilization". But this, he claims rightly, is a very vague thing. "It is, in fact, merely a frame to be filled with definite objects, not a definite object itself. I do not believe that I can sit down for three minutes to will civilization without my mind wandering to something else." That is a poignant confession; but I have a sadder one to make. I find it difficult to sit down for a short while (I shrink from the pain of estimating the exact number of minutes) to will, without wanderings of mind, any one of those virtues, at once transcendent and civilized, which I perceive that Babbitt willed with rare concentration. It is misleading to say that he willed "civilization". That is what is willed, in the modern sense of the verb "to will", by practically every modern man, woman, and child. And even if we should explain to them, as Eliot explains to us, that by "civilization" Babbitt does not mean merely "material progress, cleanliness, etc." but "a spiritual and intellectual coordination on a high level" – even then they would exclaim without much hesitation: "Yes, that is what we will; that's exactly our ideal, that's what we enthuse for." What Babbitt wills, however, is not mainly civilization, no matter how spiritually this may be defined. He wills, as I have suggested, certain specific virtues on which civilization ultimately depends.

But as Eliot urges that Babbitt's "higher will" is lacking in definite and objective values, it would seem that Eliot does not regard those virtues as definite and objective values. This attitude agrees entirely with the view of the many – yet Eliot is certainly one of the few. He puzzles me as much as Babbitt's higher will puzzles him. However, the fact is that, setting aside strict logic, one cannot affirm that his attitude towards the virtues is really what I have stated. It is indeed quite unclear. I must leave it to be completely investigated by the doctoral scholar for whose work this paper may serve, perhaps, as a sort of prospectus.

But, as already indicated, one point is perfectly clear. Eliot believes that a "humanistic civilization" is not feasible without church-religion; though this plain term is mine, not his. He calls attention to Babbitt's high praise of the Roman Catholic Church, even in its ultramontane aspect, as an upholder of civilized standards. And he claims that for some of Babbitt's followers there is the danger of a "collapse into a Catholicism *without* the element of humanism and criticism, which would be a Catholicism of despair". One must agree. But those unhappy collapsing followers of Babbitt – just who might they be? Eliot tells us that they are "those who had followed him to the end and had found no hay in the stable". And indeed I think there would need to be an equine, even asinine, touch in the nature of such persons. But this suggestion is not intended by Eliot; he is speaking quite seriously. Therefore I must take serious objection to his metaphorical "hay". A less picturesque but clearer and fairer term would be "church-religion".

This becomes more evident near the conclusion of the essay. Here, regarding the final issue of Babbitt's philosophy, Eliot writes (and I shall take the liberty of inserting two numbers, obsessed as I am at present by an almost mathematical lust of clarity): (1) "It should lead, I think, to the conclusion that the humanistic point of view is auxiliary to and dependent upon the religious point of view." (2) "For us, religion is of course Christianity; and Christianity implies, I think, the conception of the Church." Now, fair and careful readers of Babbitt must know that with each of those two sentences, taken by itself, he would entirely agree; assuming that the pronoun "us" in sentence (2) means, not everyone in the world, not even everyone in Christendom, but, let's say, the large majority of Occidental persons. I am confident that Mr. Eliot could not refuse to condone this exegesis of "us". However, his transition from sentence (1) to sentence (2) is considerably obscurant – too obscurant in view of his declared purpose of helping to clear up "the obscurities of humanism". That transition may be termed deflective or diverting: it slides away from the fact that not all "religion" is church-religion. So that sentences (1) and (2), taken together, have the effect of identifying, for all practical purposes, "religion" and the Christian Church.

Such identification is of course rejected by Babbitt. Moreover, it is un-Christian and un-Catholic; indeed, I think it may fairly be termed heretical. For the Church Christian and Catholic has always maintained the doctrine implied in its Founder's declaration that He had others who are not of this fold. This doctrine is surely one of the Church's saving graces. Trodden under foot so often by the many, it has been upheld firmly by the few; and the few, in this case, have been numerous and authoritative. In short, the orthodox teaching of the Church is that there is much valid religion – that is, practical, saving religion – outside the Church.

But of course Mr. Eliot knows all this since he is an orthodox Churchman. Why then, unlike Professor Mercier and other orthodox Churchmen, does he fail to find *any* religious validity in Babbitt's humanism? Perhaps he would reply that he *does* find it but that the point is irrelevant to the purpose of his present essay, which is concerned with the social or institutional, not with the personal or individual, mode of religion. But it is not possible to isolate those two modes from each other: I have shown that there is an unwitting slipperiness in Eliot's use of the word "religion" and the phrase "the religious point of view". Moreover, as he remarks at the beginning: "It is proverbially easier to destroy than to construct." And in his very fear (not well founded, as I have suggested, except with regard to equine persons) that Babbittian humanism may have a destructive effect on "religion", he runs the worse risk of destroying, by wittily obscuring throughout this essay, the real and saving element of "religion" which that humanism has. Surely it would have been relevant for the writer of this essay to state plainly that, beyond terminology, Babbitt's "higher will", even though it is un-churched, is a part of the Divine Will which Christianity adores.

This matter is of importance for the Church; particularly, I believe, for the Anglican Communion. Like Mr. Eliot I am a member of that branch of the Church – unlike him, a lifelong but sometime wandering and always very peripheral member; yet, on occasions, quite patriotic. I recall the pleasure that I experienced on a certain day some years ago when I learned that T. S. Eliot, so very modernistic (as he seemed then) but so very gifted and influential a leader in the post-War generation, had become an Anglican. But I do not wish his view of humanism – the whole tradition of which, not merely the Babbittian sort, is envisaged in his essay – to be regarded as fairly representative of the Anglican outlook. He is becoming more and more a spokesman, an able one, of the Anglo-Catholics. But his conception of humanism is far less catholic than that of certain Roman Catholics; notably Professor Mercier, who, unlike Mr. Eliot, sees, and sees the value of, the traditional separation between humane philosophy and revealed religion, while at the same time recognizing a special religious value for today in Babbitt's version of that philosophy.

The fact is that Eliot's essay is less valuable as a criticism of humanism than as an expression of his own very interesting mind and, also, state of mind. He is reacting extremely, in large measure helpfully, from decadent and popular "personal religion". He finds therein a satanically delusive spirit, to which true religion should oppose a firm and catholic technique. Hence his almost blasphemous epigram, "the spirit killeth, but the letter giveth life". (Elsewhere he calls attention to the fact that only the Catholic Faith can lend real point to blasphemy.) Now, Babbitt too criticizes that "personal religion"; but also he rejects for himself, though he says he has no quarrel with, the principle of external ecclesiastic authority; without which, of course, there can be no catholic technique. In this respect, Eliot urges, Babbitt differs extremely from the humanists of old, who bowed to the form of religion regarded as catholic in their day.

Certainly there is a point here, but it seems to me only partially true and entirely superficial. Some time I shall try to outline a deeper-going critique of Babbitt which I think Eliot touches at here but does not really grasp. He urges that "Socrates and Erasmus were content to remain critics and to leave the religious fabric untouched". But surely that is essentially Babbitt's attitude also; though it is very curious to lump those two names together over against his. I think it would be fairer to lump Babbitt and Socrates together over against Erasmus. But Eliot remarks: "How far Socrates believed, and whether his legendary request of the sacrifice of a cock was merely gentlemanly behavior or even irony, we cannot tell; but the equivalent would be Professor Babbitt receiving extreme unction. . . ." Well, that is a very good joke. But does Eliot mean that what he wants from Babbitt is a kind of religious participation which *may* be "merely gentlemanly behavior or even irony"? That, I fear, has been the frequent attitude of the rank and file of humanists in pagan or Christian temples. But the best of them when occasion demanded were sufficiently trenchant in regard to popular religion; Socrates far more so, surely, than Eliot admits, since the popular religionists determined that an end had to be put to him. As for the Buddha, his attitude to Hinduism seems to me even more aloof than Babbitt's to Christianity. But speaking of Buddha and Confucius, Eliot states that by way of contrast "it is always the human reason, not the revelation of the supernatural, upon which Mr. Babbitt insists". Not exactly, I would reply. To be sure Babbitt is chary of the *word* "revelation". But what he really and mainly insists upon is an internal revelation, that of the supernatural Will – conceived in a trenchantly different way from that which is favored by popular religion. Here he is close to the Buddha and in line with Confucius.

"Confucianism," Eliot notes, "endured by fitting in with popular religion." But most of the fitting in, I suppose, was done by the sage's pupils and successors, not by the sage himself. A modern parallel would be T. S. Eliot fitting in Babbitt with popular Christianity. But instead he fits him out, so to speak, and – unkindest cut of all – tries to un-fit him religiously from the humanistic tradition. "His humanism is really something quite different from that of his exemplars, but (to my mind) alarmingly like very liberal Protestant theology of the nineteenth century: it is, in fact, a product – a by-product – of Protestant theology in its last agonies." This critical pronouncement seems to me T. S. Eliot at his worst as a critic. It has in it just enough truth to be specious, not enough to be true. But it is a veracious revelation of the writer's state of mind. If to be wroth with one we love doth work like madness in the brain, to turn away from Babbitt's humanism, after having been its pupil, doth certainly work one up to abnormal assertions about it.

Let the reader turn, for relieving contrast, to another and later of Eliot's essays, that on "Catholicism and International Order". This to my mind is one of the most excellent of his many excellent pieces of writing. It is Catholic and catholic; it is wise, thought through, and durable. The critic's touch has here a mature and serene certainty that it lacks in the essay on Babbitt. His wit, though playing incessantly, is thoroughly subdued to the service of a grave and clear ethical purpose. He is entirely himself; yet I think that a coming investigator of the literature of our time will find here, deep down, some influence of Irving Babbitt on T. S. Eliot.

REVIEWS

The Royalist Revolution*

THIS book, by the son of the Duc de Guise, pretender to the French throne, is an earnest and thoughtful answer to the question, "Exactly what would the French royal family do if they were returned to power in France?" By its incisive exposition of the failure of the present French regime (and of parliamentary regimes in general), it provides an important document in the contemporary discussions of the problems of government. So many acute critics of parliamentary government have in recent years declared themselves in favor of the monarchical form that a statement of the monarchical program by the representative of a leading royal family has more actuality than similar statements have had for several generations. While the Comte de Paris is writing specifically on French conditions, the interest of the book may be said to be international.

The present review can do little more than indicate the main lines of social, economic, and political change which would accompany a restoration of the monarchy in France. Three recurring phrases give the key to the whole: *La monarchie n'est pas un parti; le chef héréditaire des familles françaises; les trois réalités primordiales — métier, région, famille.* Mon-

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*ESSAI SUR LE GOUVERNEMENT DE DEMAIN *by Henri, Comte de Paris* (FLAMMARION. 294 pp. 12 francs).

archist France, in other words, would be politically an hereditary personal government, above all parties and in direct relationship with the people (a constitutional monarchy is rejected as a bastard form, incapable of genuine leadership; the work of the Action Française is accepted, but not as a political party). Economically it would be based upon a regional and functional organization of society. Socially it would be based squarely upon the family (not "class" or "cell" or "union") as the basic social unit.

The early chapters are devoted to a destructive analysis of both parliamentary democracy and totalitarianism. The first degenerates into self-interested factionalism, with the plutocracy as the real ruler – the more dangerous since invisible, irresponsible, and anonymous: "A hidden power can be neither healthy nor legitimate." Totalitarianism can only maintain itself through an unnatural fanaticism, an "unhealthy hyper-tension": "Human instincts are eternal; such exaggerated enthusiasms are not. The ultimate relaxation of this tension, which represses normal instincts and overemphasizes a single idea, is as dangerous for such a régime as would be the death of man himself." Both political forms – parliamentary democracy and totalitarianism – tend toward a huge bureaucracy and an exaggeration of the functions of the State. In their place, the monarchy would provide an hereditary authority, sufficiently powerful to "arbitrate between factions", sufficiently wealthy to be beyond bribery; and by returning large political power to the natural regions into which the country falls, would minimize the dangers of bureaucracy and étatism. Furthermore, it would provide a continuing authority, within which tradition might grow: "Democracy lives from day to day. Dictatorship thinks only of the immediate future. Monarchy can both guide the present and foresee what is far ahead."

To the economic problem the largest part of the book is devoted. What emerges, in brief summary, is a form of corporate state which differs from the Italian conception in its strong emphasis on regionalism: a corporate state in which the present anonymous and irresponsible stock-corporation is abolished in favor of largely autonomous trade groups (labor, capital, and management included), organized regionally and operating under limitations imposed by the State, but without State participation. With this goes a strong agrarian feeling: "Only in a new civilization, more rural than urban, can we see any ground for hope at all." With it also goes a determination to decentralize economic life (with due credit to the replacement of steam power by electric, which has made such decentralization possible); to revive regional cultures; to "décongestionner les centres, redonner de l'activité, de la vie à la périphérie". The many passages on the importance of property to liberty might have come from Belloc: "The steady acquisition of property by the working people is one of the chief guarantees of their liberty. . . . We mean to facilitate it by every means, for without such property the idea of the family becomes nonsensical. . . . The problem is not to improve the condition of the proletariat, but to abolish the proletarian status. . . ."

The discussion of machinery – though it concerns a problem which does not lend itself to immediate solution – is worth quoting at greater length:

It was not machinery itself which brought apparent material happiness and well-being to the mass of men. It was power – the harnessing of the inexhaustible forces of coal and water. . . . Human needs fall into two categories: alimentary needs, which have a definite quantitative maximum, and all other needs, which in practice have no limit whatever. The idea of needs to be satisfied, which is the normal starting point for economic reasoning, was replaced by the idea of the productive capacity of the machine. . . . The machine has contributed to the present unemployment problem, but the folly of men and their thirst for gain are chiefly responsible. . . . Mankind must be spiritually re-educated. . . . The machine is a human invention – a mere thing for the hands of man, a spiritual being. If man had not prostituted his spirit, if he had not become materialist, the machine could not have enslaved him.

On the question of trade, what is proposed is a modified economic autarchy – France producing, for export, only "quality products" (with a consequent revivification of the hand crafts), abandoning the attempt to compete with other nations in mass production and price; and otherwise living as a self-contained economic unit. "Surely we must put our own house in order before we attempt to bring about international order, and France is in a stronger position than any other nation to attempt the experiment of autarchy." From the long section devoted to financial problems, two conclusions emerge. The first is a warning to monetary faddists: the present crisis is economic and social, and cannot be expected to yield to purely monetary cures: "There is no sound money possible without a sound economy." The second is a realistic acceptance of the material losses of the War.

"Reason argues that the material standard of living of every Frenchman should have been reduced as a result of the tremendous destruction of goods which accompanied the War. What actually happened was the reverse. By almost unbelievable artifices in money, credit, and mass psychology, the State postponed the day of payment for many years. But the debt is now due, and it must be paid."

Such a bare summary of the monarchy's political and economic aims necessarily leaves many questions unanswered; and it is only when one comes to the social question, which is presented as underlying all the others, that summary can give any fair notion of what is in the mind of the French royal family. Here there are no technicalities, no qualifications involved: what emerges is a social philosophy which goes straight back to the unchanging nature of man, and is stated with all the thoughtfulness, deliberation, and quiet compulsion of the Papal Encyclical on Social Justice. It stands on a firm basis of the spiritual nature of man, the need for individual moral responsibility, the requirements of human dignity in terms of work and the family, all within the framework of traditional Christian civilization. A few quotations will suffice. "To subject the workman's labor to the law of supply and demand is to debase it to the status of mere merchandise. . . . Everything which is anonymous, from the State itself through all the elements of society, must be fundamentally transformed until every individual regains a sense of responsibility. . . . Men must be re-classed not in terms of wealth but in terms of moral status. . . . A moral education, that is to say a forming of the mind which gives it true freedom, cannot be separated from a religious education. . . ." There must be no privilege without responsibility, and society must be recast in its "natural framework of the family, the trade, and the region".

Needless to say, such a view of man and his nature has only scorn for the socialism of the day; and to propose a return to the family, to the region, to personal responsibility, to a functional organization of society, in the face of present tendencies, is as revolutionary as once seemed the collectivist dream. What will be required, as this book clearly recognizes, is a "Revolution of the Right" – "Certes", writes the Count of Paris, "notre oeuvre sera vaste, et pour remonter le courant, nous devrons agir en révolutionnaires. . . ." This volume, or its author, may not make that revolution. But at least it gives an admirably clear idea of the sanity, the thoughtfulness, and the high sense of human dignity which can be counted on from the royalist camp when the Revolution comes.

MARVIN MCCORD LOWES

Two Modern Classics of Mediaevalism*

THE notable revival of interest in mediaeval studies has caused the reissue of these two modern classics of mediaeval scholarship. Henry Adams's book, which is perhaps the best general introduction to the Middle

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* MONT ST. MICHEL AND CHARTRES *by Henry Adams, with an introduction by Ralph Adams Cram* (HOUGHTON MIFFLIN. 397 pp. $3.00).

THE UNIVERSITIES OF EUROPE IN THE MIDDLE AGES *by Hastings Rashdall, edited by F. M. Powicke & A. B. Emden* (OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 3 vols., 1493 pp., $21.00).

Ages for Protestant Americans, was hitherto available only in an expensive and clumsy volume of some rarity. And Canon Rashdall's exhaustive study of the mediaeval universities, which is the last word on the subject and an intellectual history of the period it covers, has long been out of print and unobtainable for love or money. So we may well be most grateful for the resurgence of unromantic, unbiassed interest in the Middle Ages, which has induced the respective publishers to reissue these great books. We owe a debt to the neo-Thomists and, curiously enough, to the world economic and spiritual crisis which has roused men from their complacency and made them wonder if the Catholic system, which governed Europe for over a millennium, is as dead and uninstructive as the smug Whigs of an older generation thought it.

Henry Adams was a New England Puritan, an Adams of Boston. No one less likely to be overcome by a mystical and passionate attachment for the Virgin of Chartres can easily be imagined, but Adams became as mad a Mariolater as any man of the twelfth century. And somehow he was able to overcome his heritage and write about the flowering of the Middle Ages in architecture, literature, art, philosophy, and religion as no other American has ever been able to do. Somehow he achieved an understanding of the twelfth- and thirteenth-century mind and emotions and spirit, which enabled him to write a richly understanding and sympathetic book on matters that were utterly foreign to his own temperament and tradition, until he had conquered tremendous barriers of space and time.

Adams begins his pilgrimage at a great pilgrim's center, Mont St. Michel, the massive monastery which rises from the sea on the borderline of Brittany and Normandy. Mont St. Michel was one of the great ecclesiastical strongholds of the Middle Ages, for St. Michel was a militant archangel. It was here that the great lords of Normandy and the West of France often met; it was here that William the Conqueror and his captive Harold of England and William's bellicose bishop brother, Odo of Bayeux, met to plot the invasion which made England Norman in 1066. The monastery was a rich one, and the fare was famous, as it still is, although every bit of food and drink came to the rock from the surrounding sea or the nearby land. The monks built well, and kept on building, and Mont St. Michel is one of the major monuments of mediaeval architecture today. It is the sole place where one can observe the whole evolution of Norman architecture, from the pure Norman of the early eleventh century to the elaborate Gothic of the late thirteenth. These immense masses of stone, piled one on top of another in a fashion such as to make a modern worker with steel and concrete gasp, are set on living rock, on a crag which springs up from the sandy flats of the Gulf of Coutances. The peak of the rock is the floor of the crossing of the abbey church, and the rest of the great pile clings to the sides of the peak, with one great apartment superimposed upon another. It was such a place as mediaeval men loved, a stronghold of immense fastness. Today, almost nine hundred years after the first piers of the abbey were constructed, Mont St. Michel is still a great pilgrim center: people come from all France and all the world to see it for themselves, so that the crowds on a summer's day are as thick as those on the beach at Coney Island.

Mont St. Michel stunned Henry Adams; and when he had recovered from his astonishment he turned to the epic literature of the time to find what manner of men these were, who built such places. He turned to *The Song of Roland*, the epic that was chanted by Taillefer, William's minstrel, as he rode exulting between the battle-lines at Hastings. And he found the answer in this, one of the great poems of all time. But Adams was not content: he wanted to get to the heart of this period, and he pressed southwards toward the Ile de France, pausing only to observe as he passed fresh marvels of church-building, the marvellous structures of Normandy with their great *flêches* towering to the skies, and great portals opening to all men the wonders of their interiors. And he came at last to Chartres, a building which seems to have a soul and be a living spirit, for it captivates men of all faiths who come to it. Chartres, too, is one of the wonders of the world: the structure as it now stands was built by a concerted effort of all classes in fifty years, after fire had destroyed an earlier church on the same spot. Chartres was built during the great wave of ecclesiastical construction, when France alone raised over eighty cathedrals and nearly five hundred cathedral churches, at an expense of approximately a thousand millions of our money, in the single century between 1170 and 1270. No such age of building is known before or since. It is safe to say that no man, no matter how irreligious he may consider himself, can come to Chartres alone on a summer day, see its great towers rising from the plain of the Beauce, stand before its portal, and then enter the cool interior, blinded by the sun, and see the greatest windows that man has ever worked in glass come slowly out of the blackness like blue and scarlet and golden jewels against black velvet, and remain unmoved by an emotion which is more than aesthetic. It was so with Adams, and with thousands in every generation since this queen of cathedrals was built. The thing that came upon Adams here led him into many mediaeval byways: to the sweet song of Aucassin and Nicolette, to the miracles attributed by legend to Our Lady, to Abelard and Heloïse, to the great mystics, and to St. Thomas, who summed up the whole intellectual achievement of a thousand years in cold logic infused with a passionate warmth. And even more strange than such studies for an Adams of Boston, he was able, and indeed compelled, to write about these things as no other American has ever been able to write. His book is not only one for those who meet the Middle Ages for the first time in its pages, for the mediaevalist with years of study behind him can always return to its pages with fresh delight.

Hastings Rashdall was interested in the Middle Ages both as a theologian and a philosopher. The Dean of Carlisle spent twelve years upon his work, in the belief that "he who understands the life of a mediaeval university will have taken no unimportant step towards understanding the mediaeval Church and the mediaeval world". His book is more than just a carefully detailed and highly scholarly work upon the universities: it is a history of mediaeval thought and of the great intellectual leaders of the period, of

Irnerius, Gratian, Abelard, Aquinas, Ockham, and many another. His plan was "to describe, with tolerable fullness the three great archetypal universities – Bologna, Paris, Oxford – and to give short notices of the foundation, constitution, and history of the others, arranged in national groups". As the work evolved with the passing of the years, it contained full descriptions, going into the most minute detail (Rashdall's mind was fascinated by small things, although he was capable of generalization), of Oxford, Salerno, Bologna, and Paris, with a medium length account of Cambridge, and shorter notices of the other universities of Italy, Spain, France, Germany, and Scotland.

It is amazing that Rashdall should have done so much, writing as he did in 1895. The editors of this revised edition have not found a tremendous amount to alter in Rashdall's text, despite the extensive research and writing done on the universities in the last forty years. Rather they have contented themselves with swelling the notes and filling out the bibliography, so as to make readily available the best work that has been done on the subject since Rashdall's time. F. M. Powicke, Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford, undertook the revision of the first two volumes (devoted to the continental and Scotch universities), while A. B. Emden, Principal of St. Edmund's, Oxford, charged himself with the third. But both editors worked in the closest sort of cooperation, and they invoked the aid of specialists where help was obviously needed. Among the others who contributed to the new edition in this fashion are G. R. Potter, C. C. J. Webb, C. Foligno, H. Kantorowicz, Father Franz Pelster, Gaines Post, Charles Samaran, L. J. Paetow, W. J. Entwhistle, R. K. Hannay, A. Odozilik, Stanislaw Kot, H. E. Salter, Strickland Gibson, Helen Briggs, Mary Rixon, Dorothy Mackay Quinn, Hilda Moyns, Monsignor G. Lacombe, J. H. Baxter, G. G. Coulton, E. F. Jacob, Max Manitius, Roberto Weiss, and F. de Zulueta. Such an international collaboration took time, and indeed the editors have been at work for ten years upon their project.

Canon Rashdall's book in its new form will doubtless remain the definitive work for decades to come. Rashdall was capable of writing racily and vigorously, and the section on life in the mediaeval universities is a classic example of humanized scholarship. His tracing of the evolution of certain customs which are with us still is fascinating to any university man, and his comments on the intellectual life of the latter Middle Ages are as keen and penetrating as any that have ever been made. Rashdall was not as great or as clear-seeing a man, as a historian, as Bishop Stubbs, but he managed to inform his readers with all his own enthusiasm for the subject that ever lay closest to his heart from the time when he won the Chancellor's Prize at Oxford in 1883 with an essay devoted to it. And he has provided in these volumes a vivid picture of one of the Middle Ages' greatest gifts to modern culture. In many ways our modern universities are in the direct tradition of their mediaeval prototype, and this Rashdall found good, although he carefully warned against too sedulous following of precedent at the close of his giant work.

I have but one quarrel to find with this work: that it contains no account of the wandering scholars, the *vagantes*, who are one of the most humanly appealing features of mediaeval life. Rashdall looked upon them with all the scorn that the dons of the Middle Ages had for these hobo scholars who would own no university as their mistress for more than a few months. But they have been immortalized by Helen Waddell, in her book called *The Wandering Scholars*, so they are not neglected. But I suspect that if Rashdall had seen fit to devote a chapter to them, it would have been one of the most appealing and perhaps the best in this most valuable book.

MASON WADE

A Critic of Marxian Critics*

A NOTE on Literary Criticism is the first essay into criticism, in book form, of a writer who has already published four novels and two collections of short stories. James Farrell's novels dealt with the young toughs of the Chicago South Side; in the present book he treats the more literate stratum of our society which is comprised of Marxian literary critics. Indeed, his book might justly be titled *A Note on Leftist Literary Criticism*, for he devotes but two short chapters to the school of Spingarn and the school of Babbitt and More, giving the rest of his space to the Communist critics of *New Masses* and the lesser left-wing literary journals. The revised title might even be accounted more accurate amongst the Communist congregation, for it is the purpose of Mr. Farrell's book to point out the follies of those Marxian critics who have, in his view, deviated to the left and been more Marxian than Marx; he accuses them of a rigid and unimaginative application to literature of such cardinal points of doctrine as the class struggle and dialectical materialism. So, if one were to speak exclusively from within the Marxian orientation, Mr. Farrell might be deemed to hold an almost rightist position. From the repercussions his book has aroused in the Communist press, he appears to wear the mantle of orthodoxy in lonely grandeur, like an Athanasius of Union Square.

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* A NOTE ON LITERARY CRITICISM *by James T. Farrell* (VANGUARD PRESS. 221 pp. $2.50).

Literature, Mr. Farrell declares in his first chapter, is to be viewed under two aspects: the functional and the aesthetic. In its functional aspect it is an instrument of social influence, propounding moral judgements of the subject-matter it presents (not that Mr. Farrell has any traffic with the word "moral"); in its aesthetic aspect it is a source of pleasure and "refreshment". Exclusive concern on the part of writers and critics with the aesthetic he terms impressionism, and concludes that the theories raised in defense of this concern are false, while it itself leads to artistic enervation. This conclusion, as Mr. Farrell gives it, seems entirely valid, but since it has been arrived at more ably by the humanists before him, his reasons need not be mentioned here. The humanists, however, in Mr. Farrell's opinion are extreme in the opposite direction and exemplify an undue concern with the functional; their assumptions are not only "extra-literary" (as though all criticism did not rest on extra-literary assumptions) but also "in opposition to and denial of all the basic trends of modern thought". "The primary postulates of literary humanism" are "untenable, incapable of demonstration". To be doubly sure that the humanists shall be left no defense, Mr. Farrell continues "even were they tenable and demonstrable, they would still be meaningless and irrelevant". The key to the esoteric logic of this sentence is also a key to a duplex apartment:

> For, if the basic "ground" of the universe be God, or Spirit, or a Moral Prerogative, and the nature of the world be dualistic, with spirit distinguished and separated from matter and placed in a different and higher realm, the result is a duplex apartment, each level of which operates in accordance with its own laws, and to its own purposes. The upstairs apartment works to its "spiritual" ends, and these ends are distinct from those downstairs and in the cellar.

It will be plain that Mr. Farrell is rather confused as to the distinctions between humanism and supernaturalism, and unaware of the exact nature of either. Consigning the humanists to the sorry company of Roman Catholics — whose "pernicious prejudices" distress him — he gives his attention to "Left-Wing Dualism".

"On the opposite side of the political fence," he says, having bestowed the title of "Doctor" upon Irving Babbitt and found his political beliefs "unqualifiedly repugnant and reactionary", "we find various revolutionary critics whose functional extremism has been almost as grievous as that of the literary humanists. Tendencies classifiable under this extremism are usually described as 'leftist'." Leftists fall into two groups: that of "revolutionary sentimentalism", given to epithet-slinging and anti-intellectualism, best (or worst) represented by Michael Gold; and that of "mechanically deterministic 'Marxism' ", which "assumes . . . that literature follows economics obediently and directly" and whose banner is borne by Granville Hicks. To the average reader these schools will seem to dichotomize between them the whole field of Marxian literary criticism, but Mr. Farrell is convinced that there is something more to it and he attempts to show what that something more might be, but at the moment is not. Both the sentimental and the mechanical schools, in their attempt to fit all literature into the Communist mold, have been forced to look with a disapproving eye on the literature of the past, or to make analyses of it patently false; and Mr. Farrell, aware that the classics of former times are not of necessity in any way inferior to the writing now being produced under the strictest Marxian ideology, comes to the defense of works whose authors had the misfortune to write before *Das Kapital* appeared. These works, he decides, have a "persistence-value", that is, even though they do not fit the economic complex of the moment, they are still sufficiently close to central human interests for enjoyment by present-day readers. "Persistence-value" (one gathers from compounds of this sort that Mr. Farrell thinks highly of John Dewey) is also of an aesthetic and functional kind: it may be that a work is so good a piece of craftsmanship that it gives pleasure whatever the political ideas of the author, and it may be that some of the author's ideas still have relevance to the conditions of the day. Mr. Farrell earnestly asks his comrades to think especially on the latter – it is quite possible that the best minds of the past (even prior to 1867) might teach them something. Few who are familiar with

Marxist writings would quarrel with this advice.

Mr. Farrell displays a breadth of mind rare in the Marxian camp by insisting that the final criticism of a great thinker of another age is not merely to say that he was no Communist. Speaking of St. Thomas, he says that "it is inept to dismiss him with truisms and generalizations that have such broad application that they refer not only to him but also to an infinity of other phenomena, ideological and material". "We must make judgements here," declares Mr. Farrell, and he proceeds to show how the ideological and material phenomenon of Aquinas should be judged, coming to the verdict that Thomism is "one more intellectual system that must be put into a glass case in the museum of history". He especially objects to what he takes to be St. Thomas' method of proving the existence of God. St. Thomas is given to "absolutizing" first principles, and "the central 'universal or absolute' is the Unprecedented First Cause of the universe — an omniscient and omnipotent God". Mr. Farrell seems to be saying, in other words, that an absolute is posited, then is capitalized into an Absolute, and God's existence is said to be proved. If there were anything like this in St. Thomas, it most certainly would be a curious museum-piece; but since St. Thomas proves God's existence by arguments from plain sense-data and what is immediately apprehensible of the nature of thought, no such thing can be found in the *Summa*. Perhaps, having found St. Thomas a potential ally of fascism, Mr. Farrell has fallen back on the method of John Spivak in dealing with fascists and considers fancy more reliable than facts.

Spinoza, on the other hand, is someone with a functional "persistence-value". This is because "Spinoza formulated a system of rational determinism", *i.e.*, he came closer to being a Marxist than did St. Thomas. In reducing "God to the status of a mathematical axiom" Spinoza made "a forward and progressive step, and hence we can say that he rendered an incalculable service to the human race". Mr. Farrell of course views the history of thought as a steady progress toward the apocalyptic advent of Marxism.

When Mr. Farrell comes to consider the literature of the present he is plainly on more familiar ground and many of his particular judgements are not lacking in common sense. The criticism he is dealing with is chiefly criticism of poetry and fiction, and he points out that critics like Messrs. Calverton, Schneider, Freeman, and Hicks fail to appreciate the works they judge because they are so intent on reading into them private Marxian theses. In some cases, where the work considered is not an overt appeal to its readers to mount the barricades, these critics condemn good books as the mean products of fascist and bourgeois thought; in other cases, where the author plainly thinks matters of art trivial before the burning question of the Revolution, they are loud in their praises. Mr. Farrell contends that before a book is taken as literature it must show signs of literary skill. He also holds that the primary purpose of literature is not to incite to political action (though it is so much the better if it does), but to give us further knowledge of life and to provide aesthetic delight in doing so.

Now, says Mr. Farrell, neither knowledge nor delight is to be had from a false interpretation of Marxism. If the doctrines of Marx are incorrectly applied to letters, they render a distorted picture of life, and the work giving such a picture is aesthetically unsatisfying because it lacks any internal necessity in its structure. He asks for a more far-sighted view of economic determinism and the class struggle, indicating that the impact of economics on man's thoughts and actions is not immediate, and that these may in turn influence the economic condition that caused them. The class struggle is not so immediate a factor either; its influence on a man may be very remote, but that does not make him less worth treatment by a novelist, even by a proletarian novelist. The definition of literature as propaganda is also evil, for, in the first place, novels and poems are in no way so effective in producing immediate political action as agitators' speeches, and, in the second place, they lose their effectiveness as literature when they attempt this. Of course, Mr. Farrell rejects none of the central tenets of Communist dogma; he is merely objecting to the village-atheist manner in which his comrades have been applying these to literature. In the end, Mr. Farrell is as open to intellectual attack as any of his less sensitive fellows: one cannot justify a false theory by applying it with a certain amount of intuitive discrimination. As has been indicated, Mr. Farrell adheres to the stalest forms of nineteenth-century materialism and belief in progress; a little fresh icing of organic "process" to cover the moldy mechanical idea should deceive no one.

If this book were not addressed to Marxists, it would have to be accounted a pitifully ignorant and brash performance. Mr. Farrell shows not the least aptitude for dealing with abstractions, which he yet recognizes must be the basis of any general argument, and he seemingly has very little knowledge, and less understanding, of the literature of ideas outside the pages of *New Masses* and *Partisan Review & Anvil.* His book has a peculiarly sectarian air, and the justifying quotations from Marx, Engels, and Lenin are reminiscent of the manner in which Bible Christians once used the words of earlier prophets. But the book is noteworthy as signifying the revolt of an insider against the intellectual atrocities of the Marxian literary camp in their more obvious forms. Mr. Farrell — who, as a novelist, has shown a good degree of intuitive understanding of human nature in its baser aspects — has plainly felt that what is observable in human affairs does not coincide with what the Marxian pontiffs say about them, and where these incongruities are most evident in fiction and literary criticism, he has, to his credit, pointed them out, although he is far from seeing the fundamental contradiction involved. Since this merit is here conceded to him from the right, his companions of the pen will doubtless find in it one more occasion to condemn him for supplying ammunition to the enemy. But they will be without justification, for all that he has said that is truly pertinent, and said out of a vague feeling that something is wrong somewhere, has been better said elsewhere, supported by clear analysis and sound learning.

GEOFFREY STONE

The Great Chain of Being*

THE title of this book is one of the most famous phrases in the history of Western thought. Connoting three separate ideas which, taken together, have produced one of the major conceptions of our philosophical heritage, it involves a certain view of the nature of God, an evaluation of the universe in the light of that natural theology, and a willingness to grapple philosophically with the problem of evil in a world that God has made.

Professor Lovejoy, the incumbent of the philosophical chair at Johns Hopkins for the past twenty-six years, approaches the historical study of this great conception from the angle of what might be termed a diluted idealism. Finding that the pure idealism of his early years was untenable, he committed himself, in an essay written seven years ago, to what he called a temporalistic realism. He believes in the existence of an extra-mental physical world and holds fast to a doctrine of "ideas" that has something of the Cartesian or Lockian flavor. From this eclectic standpoint he faces the task of describing the long history of the conception known as the Great Chain of Being. His historico-philosophical interest lies in ideas rather than in systems. Systems are, it seems, unstable combinations of ideas. "To the common logical or pseudological or affective ingredients behind the surface-dissimilarities the historian of individual ideas will seek to penetrate."

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*THE GREAT CHAIN OF BEING: A STUDY IN THE HISTORY OF AN IDEA *by Arthur O. Lovejoy* (HARVARD UNIVERSITY PRESS. 382 pp. $4.00).

Subscribing to the Whitehead dictum that "the safest general characterization of the European philosophical tradition is that it consists of a series of footnotes to Plato", he tells us in the beginning of his second chapter that all that follows might serve as an illustration of that remark. We are prepared, then, for a qualified approval of the part played by Aristotle in the history of human thought. Despite his Platonist leanings, however, he brackets the Stagirite with Plato as the originator of the conception of the world which men were to accept, for more than twenty-three hundred years, as the Great Chain of Being.

Two conflicting strands are to be found, it seems, in the Platonic tradition. One of these our author calls otherworldliness. By this he means the doctrine that both the genuinely "real" and the truly good are radically antithetic to anything to be found in man's natural life. Based on the idea of a self-sufficing perfection, this otherworldliness has given rise to the conception of an unseen, eternal world, of which the visible world is but a pale copy. From this Platonic origin "the belief that the highest good for man lies in somehow translocating himself into such a world has been perennially nourished". It is *this* Plato that our author finds to be the main historic source of the indigenous strain of otherworldliness in Occidental philosophy and religion, as distinguished from the imported Oriental varieties.

But he discovers in the Platonic deposit another strand, far less noted by historians, but, in itself, the most notable fact about Plato's influence on Western thought. That strand he calls the this-worldliness. It seems that Plato's thought no sooner reaches its climax in the otherworldly direction than it suddenly reverses its course. "Having arrived at the conception of an Idea of Ideas which is a pure perfection alien to all the categories of ordinary thought and in need of nothing external to itself, he finds in just this transcendent and absolute Being the necessitating logical ground of the existence of this world."

Thus, Plato first posits utter self-sufficiency as the essential note of the Good, and then discovers that this all-perfect Good must diffuse itself according to what is called the principle of plenitude. In this connection Dr. Lovejoy makes the claim that "the proposition, *omne bonum est diffusivum sui*, here makes its appearance as an axiom of metaphysics".

At this stage Aristotle comes on the scene, building up his theory of the classification of forms and introducing to speculative thought the principle of continuity. That this great principle was Aristotle's discovery is admitted by our author with a certain degree of qualification, for he tells us that "from the Platonic principle of plenitude the principle of continuity could be directly deduced". However that may be, the two principles seem to have become fused in Aristotle's thought, and we are told:

> The result [of this fusion] was the conception of the plan and structure of the world which, through the Middle Ages and down to the late eighteenth century, many philosophers, most men of science, and, indeed, most educated men, were to accept without question—that conception of the universe as a Great Chain of Being, composed of an immense, or of an infinite, number of links ranging in hierarchical order from the meagerest kind of existents through "every possible" grade up to the *ens perfectissimum*.

While our author makes Plato and Aristotle jointly responsible for the first formulation of this great conception, he holds that the ingredients of this complex of ideas had to await the appearance of Neo-Platonism to be fully organized into a coherent general scheme of things. From the Neo-Platonists it passed over into the theology and cosmology of mediaeval Christendom, mainly through the work of Augustine and the pseudo-Dionysius, "two men [who] more than any others determined the formula for this new compound of old ingredients".

Coming to the consideration of the modern period, which he dates from the eighteenth century, Dr. Lovejoy finds that the shift in viewpoint, and the consequent repudiation of the traditional notion of a hierarchical scale of being, was due, not to the achievements of the scientists, but "to the influence of those originally Platonistic metaphysical preconceptions which had, though potent and persistent, been always repressed and abortive in mediaeval thought". Plato's principle of plenitude, which is here assumed to have given to Aristotle and the Neo-Platonists and subsequently to the mediaevalists the notion of a static and permanently complete Chain of Being, had evolved for the men of the eighteenth century into five revolutionary theses in cosmography: the assumption that there are other inhabited planets of our solar system, the shattering of the outer walls of the mediaeval universe, the conception of the fixed stars as suns surrounded by planetary systems of their own, the supposition that the planets in those other worlds are inhabited, and the assertion of the actual infinity of the physical universe in space and of the number of solar systems contained in it. The effect of these revolutionary theses upon the modern mind is summed up by the author in this conclusion:

> The history of the Chain of Being, in so far as that idea presupposed such a complete rational intelligibility of the world, is the history of a failure. It is the record of an experiment in thought, which can now be seen to have an instructive negative side. The experiment, taken as a whole, constitutes one of the most grandiose enterprises of the human intellect. But [the consequences] show the hypothesis of the absolute rationality of the cosmos to be unbelievable. . . . Yet the utility of a belief and its validity are independent variables; and erroneous hypotheses are often avenues to truth.

So there is the sad story of the Platonist approach. It is the story of an exaggerated intellectualism which, as Aristotle indicated with amazing clarity, was certain to lead the human mind to ultimate defeat. In the abundance of his critical footnotes to Plato, the Stagirite placed his finger unerringly on many false principles latent in the older man's philosophy. His trenchant polemic against the doctrine of ideas charges its author with making it impossible for men to arrive at any satisfactory account of Nature. Specifically he accuses Plato of an inability to distinguish in the activity of things the respective parts played by the efficient and the final cause, denouncing the founder of the Academy for having neglected "the efficient cause which is the principle of change". And in the very beginning of his *Metaphysics* he maintains that there is no archetype of motion in the Platonic world of ideas, saying that "if we cannot explain motion, the whole study of Nature has been annihilated". Indeed he did not hesitate to label the entire Platonic theory of archetypal ideas as sheer fiction.

But Aristotle was something more than a mere critic. He was a philosopher in his own right. A due appreciation of the meaning of his concepts of potency and act, matter and form, the transcendentals and the causes, would have saved the men of the last two centuries from much of the philosophical bankruptcy of which this type of book, despite the brilliant style in which it is written, is the convincing evidence.

CHAS. F. RONAYNE